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GUIDE TO GAMES FOR ATARI COMPUTERS

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AND NEWS ABOUT
COMPUTERS

electronic GAMES

Computer Games • Videogames • Stand-Alone Games • Arcades

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THE YEAR'S
TOP GAMES:

THE 1984 ARCADE AWARDS

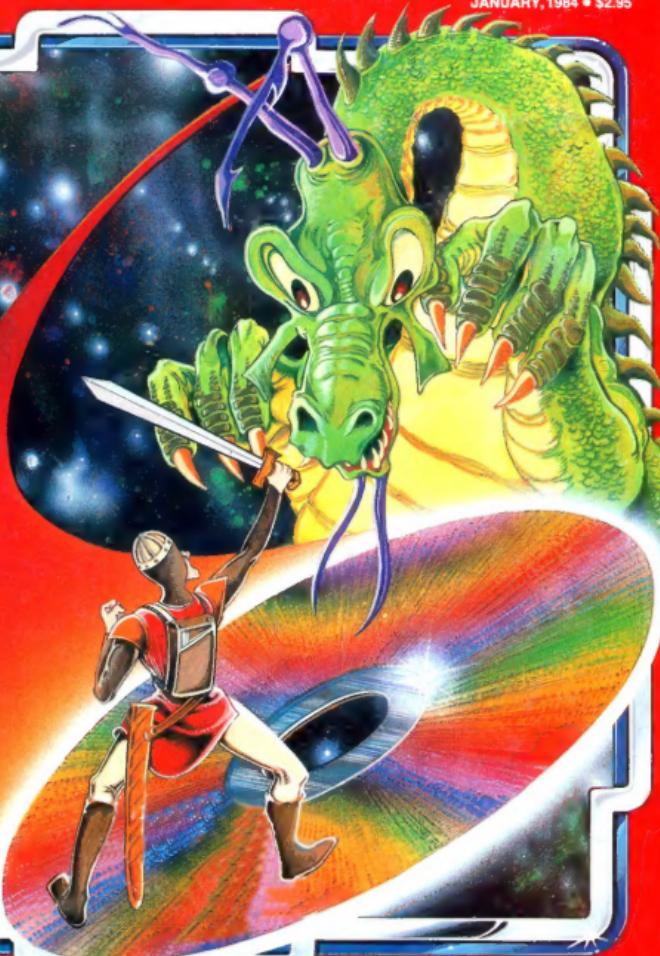
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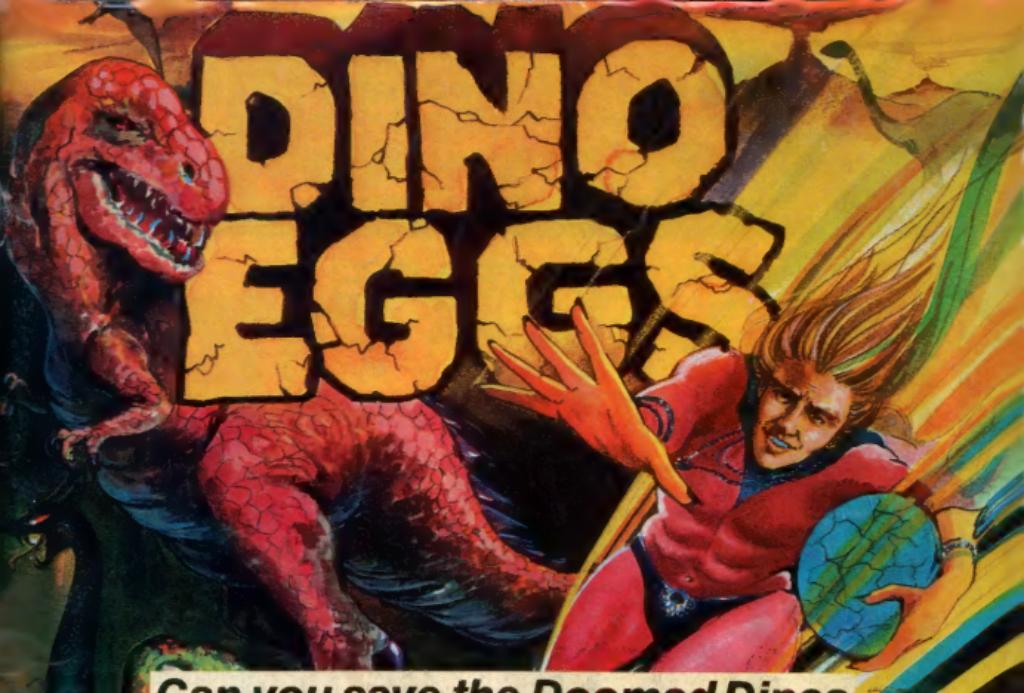


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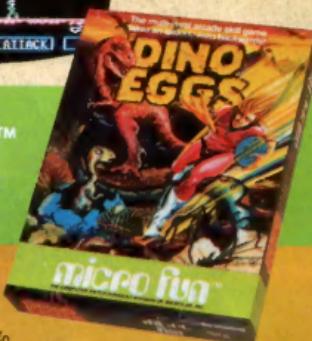
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years old round 800. Canada, see part III; foreign, see separate, see part III, in 10 parts. Administration, navigation, and transportation in India. London, 1811. See also 1811. Oliver, R. (1810) A new and exact map of the British Empire in Asia. London, 1810. Changes of names, particularly in former French colonies, and new names and new code of material listed in the frequent additions to manuscript. Change indicates names and positions assumed by descendants, see also *colonial, French, n.s.*

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SWITCH-ON



It's Crystal Ball Time!

By ARNIE KATZ

I took me nearly an hour to hunt up my crystal ball. The swami turban and video tarot cards were a snap to find by comparison. I just couldn't recall where I'd put the orb after writing my predictions in last January's installment of "Switch On!"

I finally found the ball tucked away in a carton full of cartridges from Games by Apollo. Now, it's temporarily set up on my desk and ready to do its stuff.

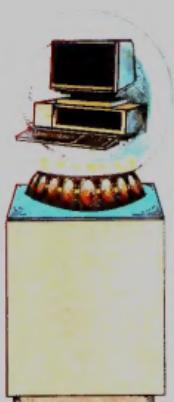
But first, it only seems fair to see how I did last year. My guess that manufacturers would sell eight million videogame systems and 80 million cartridges proved slightly conservative, but not that bad. My estimate that computer ownership would double in 1983 also turned out to be short of the mark (tripled would be closer). I was right about games coming to players over the phone and about at least two systems biting the dust (Fairchild and Astrocade), but I apparently jumped the gun when it came to the appearance of the first full-time pro aracer. Maybe next year. Equally erroneous was my guess that handheld programmables would

make their debut in 1983. That's another good prediction for 1984, probably.

That duty discharged, let's move on to my prognostications for 1984. . .

*Manufacturers will sell more than 100 million videogame cartridges, but hardware will probably move out of the stores slightly slower than in 1983, perhaps eight million videogame systems.

*Home computer sales, spurred by price cuts,



will exceed 10 million units.

*By the end of the year, there will only be two videogame systems in active production as gamers flock to computers for their home arcading.

*Though stand-alones will be less numerous than a couple of years ago, the technology will continue to improve. This year should see the first stand-alone featuring its own miniature raster-screen.

*Laser-disc games, now starting to hit it big in coin-op game parlors, will reach the home market from at least three different manufacturers. At least one firm will offer games that are true hybrids of computer and video-disc technology.

*The most popular genre of action games in 1984 will be the color-changing contests such as Q*Bert.

And I would like to close with one final prediction: a year of health and happiness for all EG readers. Happy New Year! ☺



ATARI 5200



ATARI 400



ATARI 800



ATARI 600XL



TI99/4A



ATARI 2600



INTELLIVISION



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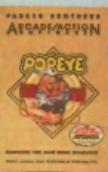
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And while you're there, check out TUTANKHAM,[™] FROGGER,[™] Q*bert[™] and SUPER COBRA,[™] also from Parker Brothers' Arcade Action Series.



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HOTLINE

PILOT THE VIDEO SPACE SHUTTLE

By now, the only people who believe the Atari 2600 is a toy are those who haven't seen Activision's *Space Shuttle: A Journey into Space*. Released last November, *Space Shuttle* is the most innovative and exciting game/simulation to have ever come out for the VCS. While the gamer pilots a shuttle from launch—through docking maneuvers—to landing, he must check various readings and make adjustments with the VCS's toggle switches.

Designer Steve Kitchen, who researched the real shuttle with NASA's help, reprogrammed the console so it becomes a flight control panel. (For example, the right difficulty switch opens and closes cargo bay doors and lowers landing gear.) Kitchen also included a demo mode, a training flight and a mission flight, as well as some outstanding audio/visual effects.

Move over NASA, here come the Activision astronauts!



SPACE SHUTTLE (ACTIVISION)

TI 99/4A MARKETS "GAMEPORT"

Owners of the Texas Instruments' 99/4A will be pleased to learn that the Romox "GamePort" accepts all ROM cartridges, according to Romox Prexy, Paul Terrell.

It announced earlier this year that it would modify its computer to accept only those cartridges programmed in TI's patented "GROM" format. This limits third-party

software manufacturers from producing games unless they license their product to TI, and means users can't play any "non-GROM" titles.

According to Terrell, the "GamePort" offers interested parties an alternative. By plugging the new device into the computer port and accessing the 9900 CPU directly, it can play any standard ROM cartridge.

Check your local retail outlets for this one folks.



Padre Steve Garvey getting ready to hit one out of the park.

PADRES ARE TRAINING WITH GAMES

Thanks to Sega's Champion Baseball, the San Diego Padres are sharpening up their batting averages. By playing electronic games such as this, the ballplayers can warm-up — electronically — before they go out onto the diamond!

The San Diego-based coin-op manufacturer donated a number of the coin-op machines to the Padres' clubhouse, where the guys immediately began hitting them hot and heavy.

No one knows the advantages of such a warm-up, but one thing is certain: It sure beats playing checkers.





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Air Brook Limousine Service, in our nation's capital, now offers "computa-cars"—limos that come equipped with a computer and word processor!

Execs can use the equipment to call up Congressional voting records, legislative histories, biographies of various Congressmen, and any other vital data they need.

Air Brook even calls up restaurants, grouped according to price and culinary type.

COMPUTERS TEACH TOTS

Early reports indicate that kids who play an educational game on computers test significantly higher than other children from the same age group who receive no computer experience.

The test included 20 youngsters who were divided

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clipper



CLIPPER (PDI)

into two groups. Where both groups took pre- and post-tests, the control group had no exposure at all to computers. The other group spent 10 one-hour sessions with the computer. At the end of this one-month experiment, the findings showed that the children who played on computers scored a total of 47 percent higher on a battery of standardized tests.

The experiment was hosted by Program Design, Incorporated, manufacturer of such popular arcade games as *Moonbase 10* and *Clipper: Around the Horn in 1850*.

HOTLINE



Two of the screens in Sir-Tech's *Wizardry* series.

SIR-TECH DISPLAYS HIGH-RES

Sir Tech Software has produced a brand new high-resolution display manager for the Apple II, and will test it in the marketplace in the third game of the *Wizardry* series.

The latest adventure is *Legacy of Llylgamyn*, the third scenario in the *Wizardry* fantasy role-playing program, written by Andrew Greenberg

and Robert Woodhead.

It continues the storyline through the use of a new graphic technique called "Windo-Wizardry". It allows programmers to manipulate rectangular windows of any size, which sometimes overlap to enable more information to be put on-screen at the same time.

BOOKS FOR TIMEX OWNERS

Softsync and Brady Books (a division of Prentice-Hall) have published a book of computer games exclusively targeted for owners of the Timex 1000, 1500 and 2000 computer systems.

"*Brain Games*", by Canadian professor John Stephenson, contains 26 different program listings. Each comes with a mind game as well as a few helpful shortcuts to assist younger programmers in designing their own fun as they learn mathematics and logic through games!

Dr. Stephenson explains, "For 20 years, I have been teaching mathematics. I believe it is possible to teach math and logic through the use of games. This also makes it a lot of fun for everyone."

"*Brain Games*" retails for \$9.95 and can be found in most local bookstores. Softsync, in addition, also plans versions of the book for the VIC-20 and Commodore 64.



Besides the upright model, Sega also makes a cockpit version of *Star Trek*.

PBS RAISES CASH WITH COIN-OP AUCTION

Sega Electronics generously donated a *Star Trek* coin-operated videogame to the Public Broadcasting System, located in San Diego, for their annual fund-raising auction.

Every year, PBS holds an auction to generate the necessary monies used to

maintain equipment and staff, and to purchase programming.

Telecast over several evenings, the auction features hundreds of items or services donated by viewers who strongly want to do their part to keep PBS alive.

"We feel proud to help support the outstanding job KPBS is doing for the San Diego area," said Sega's chief operating officer, Frank Fogelman. He also went on to say that Sega expects to participate in next year's upcoming auction as well.

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It may well set the standard for sophisticated
entertainment software in the '80's."

- Creative Computing.

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HARD HAT MACK™

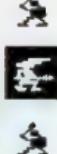
by Michael Abbot and
Matthew Alexander

"An outstanding, state-of-the-art game. Hard Hat Mack is the blue collar hero of this three screen climbing game and his tasks are far from simple."

- Arcade Express

"If you put Hard Hat Mack in the ring with all other games on the market, it would win most bouts in the opening seconds of the first round. It's that good."

- Softalk



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"...you're bound to fall for it. Imagine a chess game in which you can cast spells!"

- Creative Computing

"the offices of A.N.A.L.O.G. echo with the searing roar of dragon-fire and shouted obscenities from angry players. Archon turns friend against friend and inspires grudges that can last for days. What better compliment can you give to a computer program?"

- A.N.A.L.O.G.



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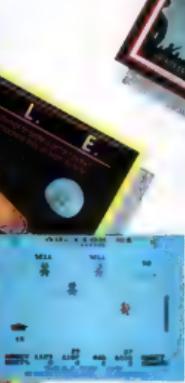
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RELIEF FOR DISC DRIVES

If you've been putting a lot of time in on your disk drive, you just may be able to give it a good spring cleaning — no matter what the season!

"Headmaster", by SSK Enterprises, effectively cleans the read/write head(s) of floppy disk drives, as well as packaging two disks good for up to 16 cleanings each, with all the necessary fluid.

SSK thinks that periodic use of the "Headmaster" reduces disk errors while protecting your disks from damage caused by dirty heads.

The suggested retail price of these utilitarian products goes from \$25-\$30, depending on your drive's size.

ATARI GOES CLUB MED

First we had kids learning computers at computer camps; now adult vacationers can do the same at the Club Med facility in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic. Visitors are getting hands-on experience with one of the 57 Atari computers in its workshop. You may even forget about all the "other" vacation activities such as surfing, water skiing, eating, etc.

Computers at the fun spot can help revelers locate a tennis partner, list special daily events, or work as message centers for vacationers at the resort.

HOTLINE



If you thought J.R. was a bad guy wait until you see the wolves in *Pooyan*

TIGER BUYS JAPANESE GAMES

Tigervision has just inked a deal to license four of the very latest top Japanese coin-ops from Orca, the Tokyo play-for-innovators.

Home editions of the games, expected to hit American arcades by mid-1984, include *Espial*, Japan's 6th ranked game in recent surveys. This one's been described as state-of-the-art high resolution graphics space attack game, in which the arceder must destroy a scrolling spy space station.

Other favorites include *Sky Lancer*, a futuristic space battle, and *Super Crush*, which places the gamer in an auto

demolition derby. The ultimate maze game is *Changes*, featuring multiple patterns and pretty graphics combined with scrolling action.

The gamey Illinois firm holds worldwide rights on these titles for home videogames, computer games and stand-alone electronic games.

Tigervision is the software firm that brought such games as *Mine 2049er*, *Polaris*, *Springer*, and *River Patrol* to the videogame screen.

If the Japanese coin-ops are anything as good as those then 1984 is certain to be a good year.

this one, gamers must outsmart the villainous J.R. Ewing in a search for a lost map that leads to a jungle oil field.

The "really scary" portions of the game come from the savage environs, as well as from the notoriously bad J.R., who, as you may have already guessed, is busy wheeling and dealing as he tries to jeopardize the mission.

Datsoft's other home game offering, *Pooyan*, is based on the original Konami coin-op version. Gamers will find wolves clinging to hot-air balloons, traveling over a forest. Just use the bow-and-arrow to burst their bubbles, and don't forget to protect the little piggies wandering through the forest.

Dallas Quest and *Pooyan* are available through Radio Shack for the Atari, Apple and Commodore computers.

WHAT'S HOT

Look, up in the sky! It's a bird, it's a plane, it's...a zeppelin? Yes, it is. The closest most folks come to an airship in real life is a glimpse of the Goodyear blimp, but those grand gasbags are starring in three hot new games for

various computer systems.

Zeppelin (Synapse Software) is here to entertain Atari owners. *Zeppelin Rescue* (Computer Software Associates) gives Commodore 64'ers the chance to save Los Angeles, and *Murder on the*

Zinderneuf (Infocom) challenges all computerists to catch a killer aboard a luxury dirigible.

We haven't seen this many balloons on a videogame screen since *Circus Atari*. Or was it *F Troop*?



That's *Zeppelin Rescue* on the left, and *Murder on the Zinderneuf* on the right.

DATASOFT'S READY TO ROLL 'EM OUT

Datsoft is releasing *Dallas Quest* under license from Lorimar Productions (creators of the popular TV series). In

VIDEOGAMES BY RADIO

"The Screen Fiend" is a syndicated radio show exclusively tailored to the videogaming community. Audio Inventions (P.O. Box 240, Mt. Ephraim, NJ 08059) will provide a qualified radio station with five 60-second shows free of charge.

Each show incorporates the latest news and views about the industry's most recent games, home video systems, accessories and newly-emerging technology, and of course, commercials.

The END of DINKETY-DINK-DINK.

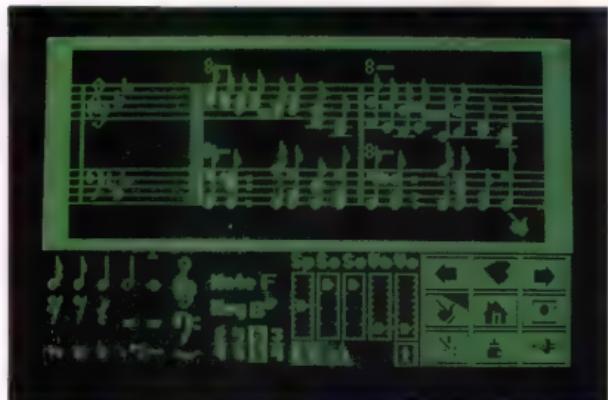
Announcing
the first computer
music program that
actually sounds like
music.

LET'S FACE IT. Up till now, music programs for your home computer have all sounded, well, pretty lame. There were the ones that resembled little electronic music boxes, remember? And then there were those that sounded like so many burps.

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Take a good look at this screen because it, you, and a joystick are the whole story here.

That's you at the right end of the staff of notes—the little hand. Move the joystick, and you move the hand. Use it to carry notes up to the staff. Lay in rests, signatures, clefs, then point



to the little piano in the lower right and listen, because you'll hear the whole thing played back.

Move those little scales in the middle up and down to vary the music's speed, sound quality, and volume. Use



the scissors to cut out whole measures, then use the glue pot to paste them in somewhere else. Got a printer? Great. Print the score out and show it off to your friends.

But what if you're not up to writing your own stuff yet? No problem. There are twelve pieces of music already in here, from rock 'n' roll to baroque. They're fun to listen to, and even more fun to change. (Apologies to Mozart.)

The point is, the possibilities are endless. But if you're still skeptical, visit your nearest Electronic Arts dealer and do the one thing guaranteed to send you home with a Music Construction Set in tow.

Boot one up. Point to the piano. And listen.



MUSIC CONSTRUCTION SET[™] is now available for Apple II+ IIe and Commodore 64 computers. The Apple version has a Max Engboard[™] piano keyboard that can play up to six notes each. The Commodore version plays chords of three notes each. Apple is a registered trademark, and Apple Computer is a registered trademark of Commodore Business Machines, Inc. For more information about Electronic Arts, write us at 2735 Campus Drive, San Mateo, CA 94403 or call (415) 571-7777.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, IT'S A GAME!

Roklan Corporation and Ripley's International have agreed to enter into a joint venture to create video and computer games based upon the "Ripley's Believe It Or Not" series.

According to Jim Gonzalez, Vice President of Sales and Marketing at Roklan, the games "will tie in with the Ripley's cartoon characters and will be an extension of the popular ABC television series."

Editions of "Believe It Or Not" for the Atari VCS, Intellivision, and ColecoVision are already underway, while computer versions for the Atari, Commodore 64 and Apple computers aren't too far behind. They should be here this winter.

"POWER PLAY'S" A WINNER OF AN ARCADE

We all know that Jay Simon's fantastic Power Play Arcade, located just a few minutes from Disney World, has lots of little extras to keep gamers coming back for more and more. But that's not all...

This natural showman also has other talents, video-related of course, including having a laser/holography expert fly a 3-D red, white and blue Phoenix down a highway and then onto his parking lot.

Jay Simon is best-known for staging some pretty wild and exciting events in his Florida game palace. Just to give you a little taste of Jay's kind of fun, you can expect, on any given night, to get flooded by a smoke machine that fills the game room. For Halloween, Jay had a gigantic Flash Gordon-style spaceship land smack in the center of his arcade, complete with a laser light show and a special costume party, in which everyone got to wear their fave game-playing attire.

Ready for some more? Jay has even brought costumed videogame characters to visit the children's wards in hospitals and then to the local schools to brief the kids on this incredibly surging technology.

HOTLINE

SOFTWARE BEAT

SoftSync's **Dancing Feats**, designed by Christopher Chance, turns Atari and Commodore 64 computers into music synthesizers. Joystick jockeys sound like virtuosos

base against hordes of alien bandits trying to steal the goodies...

Coleco plans a super version of *War Games* (based on



DANCING FEATS (SOFTSYNC)

when they create melodies and on-screen light displays using the program's selection of bass, beats, styles and rhythms. While you play, the notes and chords are displayed on the bottom of the

the MGM/UA movie by the same name) for the Adam computer, later this year...



screen, and the program also lets you record and playback your compositions...

Bandits, the shoot-em-up from Sirius Software, is now available for the Commodore 64 in addition to the Apple, Atari and VIC-20 computers. Players guard a lunar supply

Epyx has released a home version of the Exidy hit educational game, *Fax*, for play on the Apple or Commodore 64 computers. *Fax* is a video quiz with about 900 questions in each of four categories: sports, trivia, history and entertainment, with three levels of difficulty. Gamers gain additional points for quick answers to questions that are enhanced by clever graphics, and wrong answers get humorous warnings from the computer, such as "Put your mind in gear" and "Do your homework!"...

Randamn, from Magnum Software, turns your Apple into a mystic slot machine, but with a payoff you won't find in Las Vegas. When the spin-

ning stops, it selects an opponent for you to defeat. At stage one of the game, there's only one baddie to overcome, but at stage seven, there are seven. And, since everything in this game is random, the villains might be all alike, all different, or any combination, so the gamer's strategies have to keep changing to match the results of each spin of the slot machine. Survive all seven



RANDAMN (MAGNUM)

stages, which range from Stonehenge, to outer space, or even the Satan's domain, and the player becomes the Demi-god Randamn, lord of random events .



RANDAMN (MAGNUM)

Infocom's Enchanter is the first game in a new series of fantasies that guide players through a world of magical powers. Authors Marc Blank and Dave Lebling (who previously wrote the *Zork* titles for Infocom) designed a world that's under the thumb of an evil warlock who has to be banished, in a text adventure that takes gamers through an abandoned castle filled with magic. *Enchanter* is available for all computer systems, and features an important new element in adventures, the passing of time. Players have to eat, drink and sleep in the enchanted world or they'll lose their powers, just like gamers in the real world...

The Sirius adventure hit, *Blade of Blackpool*, is now available for the Commodore 64, in addition to the Apple and Atari computers. This single-player adventure makes gamers solve puzzles as they try to locate objects.

SOFTWARE ARTISTS?

TO MAKE THE FIRST BASKET-BALL PROGRAM that feels like the real thing, it helps to start with two guys who know what the real thing feels like.

Enter Larry Bird and Julius Erving. Bird — the hustler, the strong man, deadly from outside. Erving — The Doctor, maybe the most explosive player in the history of the game.

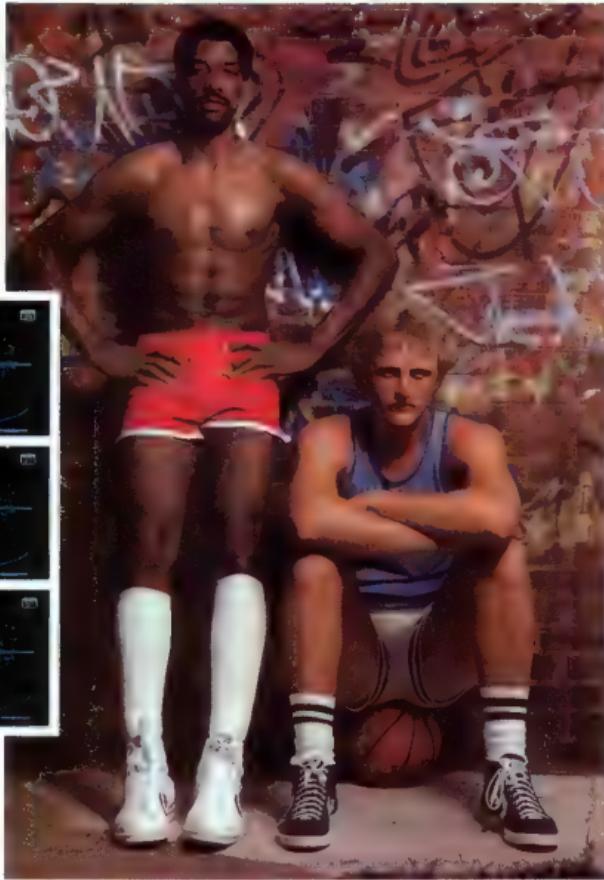
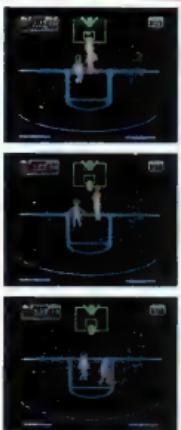
We talked to them, photographed them in action, studied their moves and their stats and their styles. Then we set out to create on computer disc an event which may never happen in real life. We put the two of them together on a dream court of light, for an electronic afternoon of one-on-one.

It wasn't easy. When they talked, we listened. When they criticized, we made big changes. When they gave suggestions, we took them.

And it shows. This thing is absolutely uncanny. You actually take on all the skills and characteristics of Bird or The Doctor — their own particular moves, shooting abilities, even strength and speed.

You'll meet with fatigue factors, hot and cold streaks, turn-around jump shots, and 360-degree slam dunks. But there's some whimsy in here, too—a funny referee, a shattering scoreboard, even instant replay.

It's called *Julius Erving and Larry Bird Go One-on-One*. You're Bird. Or you're The Doctor. And that's the last decision you'll have plenty of time to make.



Julius Irving and Larry Bird Go One-on-One
in a Game of Apples to Oranges

Annals, reprints, and other publications may be obtained from the Minnesota Historical Society.

The Electronic Arts logo consists of the company name "Electronic Arts" in a bold, black, sans-serif font, with a stylized red "EA" monogram positioned above it.

SPECTRAVIDEO PICKS SPOKESMAN

World-famous TV/film star, Roger Moore (more popularly known as James Bond, 007), has inked a deal with SpectraVideo, Incorporated.

Moore will be appearing for the corporation in its ad-campaigns as spokesman for the firm's line, as well as making a number of personal appearances on behalf of the manufacturer.

Mr. Moore, who was brought to the public's eye by his role as Simon Templar in "The Saint" on TV, hasn't really done any actual espionage work for SpectraVideo, but he should be popping up on the tube when you least expect it.

HOTLINE



MASTER BUILDER (SPECTRAVIDEO)

EX-EMPLOYEES SUE ATARI

Atari was slapped with a class-action suit by two of its former employees, charging the firm didn't give proper advance notice when laying off over 600 workers last February.

According to the protesters, Atari continued to promise its staff that their jobs were secure. Contradictorily, the firm supposedly told the National Labor Relations Board that plans to move manufacturing operations to the Far East began as early as 1981.

The current suit seeks damages totally \$3.6 million in back pay for all the ex-Atari-employees who are still unemployed, as well as \$10 million in punitive damages.

HARDWARE BEAT

Coleco has entered into a joint venture with American Telephone and Telegraph, to develop a \$100 modem so the **Adam** can communicate with other computers over telephone wires. The modem will also permit videogames and other software to be downloaded by phone into a variety of home computer or videogame systems. Other projects on the Coleco drawing board include an expansion unit to boost the resident 80,000 character memory of the **Adam** by 64,000 characters. The company has also announced plans to market an **Adam**-compatible videodisc machine to go with the home version of **Dragon's Lair**, and other laserdisc coin-

op games currently under license...

ColecoVision owners can get a kick from the **Amiga Joyboard**. The foot-controller was previously available only for the Atan 2600 and home computers...

Now even teeny-tiny batteries can be recharged. GE just introduced their AAA rechargeable battery for use in the new slim-line electronic products that take this size batteries. They'll sell for \$7.99 a pair, or \$9.99 for a pair of batteries with the recharging module...

Fluctuating power has your computer in a tizzy? Maybe

what you need is **The HAWK**, an AC power monitor and protector that protects electronic devices from voltage surges while filtering out electronic noises. The device, manufactured by Electronic Protection Devices, Inc., plugs into any wall outlet, then monitors and corrects line fluctuations, giving an audible alarm if a 15% power surge or sag occurs. It sells for \$195, and comes with a Lloyds of London insurance policy that guarantees the product's performance...

Get those videogame car-



ROMSCANNER (MARJAC)

tridges off the floor, and organized for a better play session! The **RomScanner** holds 10 cartridges, then lets the gamer switch from one to another just by pushing a button. An Atari 2600 fits right in the machine with the ten games, doing away with the clutter of carts on the floor. The manufacturer, Marjac Technology, Glendale, Wisc., promises similar devices to be introduced soon for other videogame and computer systems...

The world's smallest programmable videogame is the **Palmtex Portable Videogame System**, a pocket-sized giant that uses plug-in game cartridges that operate on a color graphic-enhanced Liquid Crystal Display mini-screen.

Games are to be released at the rate of two per month.



ADAM (COLECO)



These instructions could save your life.

STAR TREK
STRATEGIC OPERATIONS SIMULATOR

COMBAT CONTROL PANEL

Phasers are armed and ready for constant fire. They are the only weapon effective against the mighty Nomad.

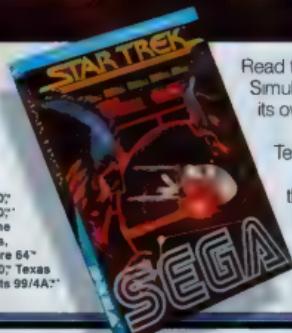
Warp speed will get you out of tight situations fast. And it's about the only way you can get close enough to fight Nomad.

A photon torpedo can take out a cluster of Klingons. But they're in short supply, so don't waste 'em.



Impulse engines let you maneuver the Enterprise through minefields and enemy ships.

You can replenish your supply of weapons and shields by docking the Enterprise at a Starbase. But every time you dock, it costs you points.



Made for:
Atari® 2600™
Atari® 5200™
Atari® Home
Computers,
Commodore 64™
and VIC-20™ Texas
Instruments 99/4A™

Read this page very carefully before you play Star Trek Strategic Operations Simulator, the home video game that's so fast, so challenging, it comes with its own Combat Control Panel.

This is Star Trek as you've never played it before. Born in the arcade. Tested under fire. Then made even better. More challenging.

You fight Klingons and alien saucers throughout the galaxy. Maneuver through fields of space mines. And confront the ultimate enemy, Nomad. An enemy so powerful you'll need full phasers, warp speed and your Combat Control Panel to defeat him.

Star Trek. With the exclusive Star Trek Combat Control Panel. Don't leave Earth without it.

SEGA
The Arcade Winners.

IBM 'PEANUT' DEBUTS!

By now, the once-secret IBM "Peanut" should be out from under wraps. The new machine will retail for approximately \$700, including the console and disk drive. A fully integrated system that comes equipped with a printer will sell for around \$1300.

The "Peanut" consists of a console with built-in disk drive and keyboard, as well as a cartridge slot for software programs. Operable with either a monitor or TV, the "Peanut" will supposedly be able to run software designed for the IBM-PC computer.

Best of all, "Peanut" sports increased graphics and improved color capacity that should make all computer gamers happy!

So let's break it open already, IBM!

COMPUTER WEEKEND HITS CHICAGO!

Over 1,000 computerists, ranging from tots to over the hillers, gathered to see demos, hear speeches and look at exhibits which stressed the entertainment and educational aspects of home computing, at the Chicago Hyatt Regency Woodfield Hotel.

Arnie Katz, editor of *Electronic Games* magazine, and Joyce Worley, editor of *EG Hotline*, were two of the major speakers at the fun-filled "Computer Weekend" extravaganza.

"All electronic games are educational to some degree," asserted Joyce Worley in her talk on the gaming industry. She also went on to explain that the mind and body challenges, posed by even the most straightforward shooting game, teach the gamer habits of the mind which progressively prepare him or her for subsequent learning experiences.

Katz' talk mainly focused on the future of electronic gaming. Also seated on the panel was animator Frank Steinberg. Steinberg predicts that continued increase in the memory size of home computers will lead to games of a scope and complexity that would be unthinkable now.

E.G. READERS PICK THEIR FAVORITE GAMES

Most Popular Videogame Cartridges

Position	Times		System	Manufacturer
This Month	Last Month	on List	Game	
1	1	6	Donkey Kong, Jr.	ColecoVision
2	11	10	River Raid	Atari 2600
3	New	New	Miner 2049er	ColecoVision
4	5	14	Pitfall	Atari 2600
5	8	5	Pac-Man	Atari 5200
6	14	13	Zaxxon	ColecoVision
7	6	10	Lady Bug	ColecoVision
8	New	New	Robot Tank	Atari 2600
9	4	14	Donkey Kong	ColecoVision
10	3	6	Ms. Pac-Man	Atari 2600
11	2	6	Centipede	Atari 5200
12	—	11	Frogger	Atari 2600
13	7	2	Keystone Kapers	Atari 2600
14	New	New	Enduro	Atari 2600
15	12	2	Miner 2049er	Atari 5200

Most Popular Computer Games

Position	Times		System	Manufacturer
This Month	Last Month	on List	Game	
1	1	8	Miner 2049er	Atari/Apple
2	2	21	Star Raiders	AT 4-8-1200
3	6	19	Pac-Man	AT 4-8-1200
4	New	New	Donkey Kong	AT computers
5	3	14	Centipede	AT 4-8-1200
6	5	11	Choplifter	Atari/Apple, VIC-20
7	4	6	Astro Chase	Atari
8	New	New	Aztec	Apple II
9	—	2	Shamus	AT computers
10	New	New	Kick-Man	Commodore 64

Most Popular Coin-Op Videogames

Position	Times		Game	Manufacturer
This Month	Last Month	On List		
1	New	New	Dragon's Lair	Cinematronics
2	6	2	Star Wars	Atari
3	1	5	Pole Position	Atari
4	2	5	Q*bert	MyStar
5	7	4	Burgertime	Bally Midway/Data East
6	3	3	Xevious	Atari
7	8	15	Donkey Kong	Nintendo
8	—	10	Joust	Williams
9	—	2	Popeye	Nintendo
10	New	New	Front Line	Taito

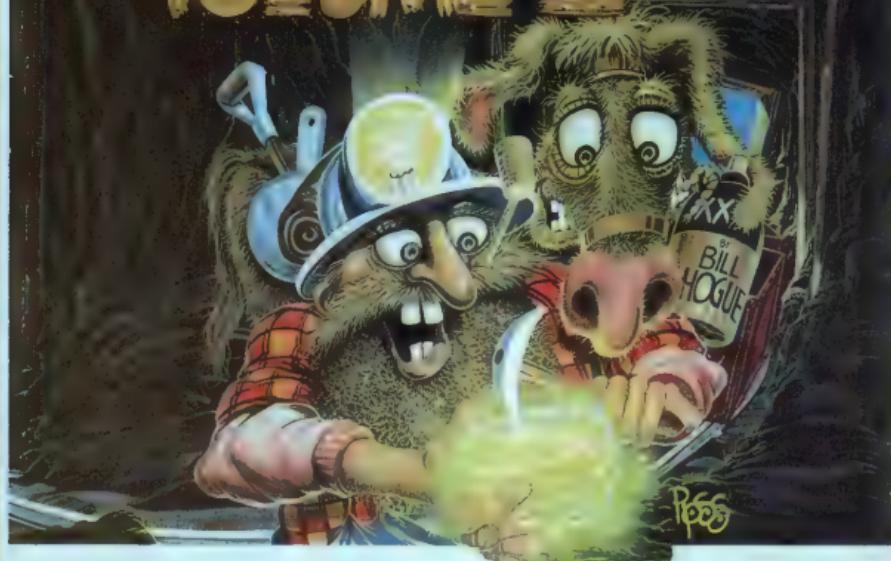
Readers Choose Top Games

Since mere quantity of play doesn't necessarily equal actual popularity, *Electronic Games* bases its standings on the votes of its readers. These lists of most popular games are based upon more than 1000 Reader Polls. We update the "picked hits" lists in every issue of *Electronic Games*.

So send in your votes!

THE BEST VIDEO GAME AROUND
JUST GOT BETTER.

NEW MINER 2049^{ER}
VOLUME II



Lift



Crusher



Radioactive Waste



The hottest video game to come down the pike in a hound's age, Miner 2049er, is now out in a new, second edition. Three thrilling new screens challenge Bounty Bob in ways only Bill Hogue, the game's creator, could dream up. One false

move and Bob's in big trouble. If he's not about to be gobbled up by a pool of radioactive waste, he's probably a whisker away from being crushed by an enormous jackhammer.

Needless to say, if you plan on getting Bob through in one piece, you're

going to have to dig down deep for every ounce of skill and ability you can muster.

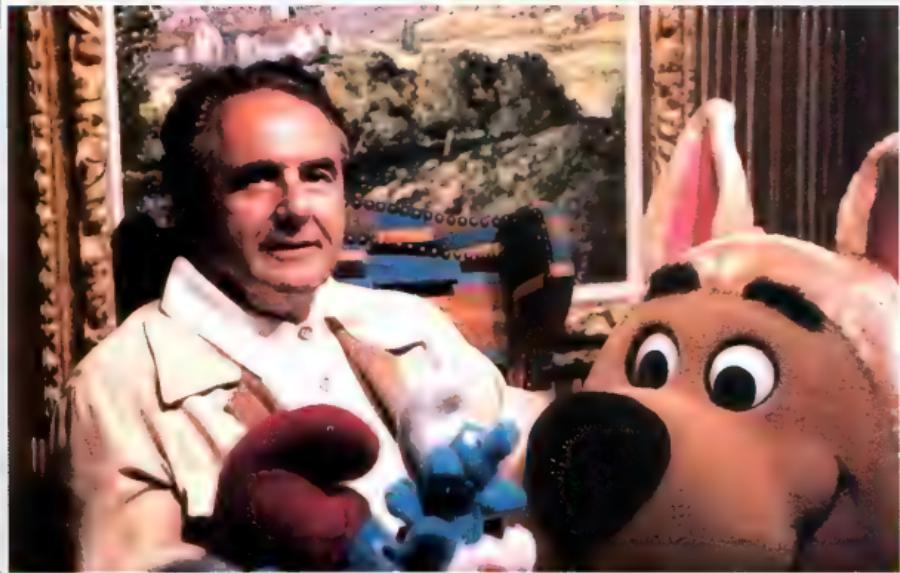
Miner 2049er, Volume I, put you to the test. Miner 2049er, Volume II, however, goes a step further. It puts you over the edge.

POR USE WITH THE ATARI VCS 2600®

TIGERVISION®

Tiger Electronics Inc.
409 Orchard • Mundelein, Illinois 60060 • (312) 949-8100

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are trademarks of Atari, Inc.
Miner 2049er is a trademark of Big Five Software, Inc.
©1981 Tigervision



Joseph Barbera of Hanna-Barbera fame was the force behind the creation of the Pac-Family (shown below).

MEET PAC-MAN'S VIDEO GODFATHER

**Joe Barbera Talks about
T.V.'s 'Pac-Man' Show**

By GABE ESSOE

Since the days of P.T. Barnum, it has become a well-established fact that a celebrity in any field of endeavor can become a show business personality. Look at Buffalo Bill Cody, a frontiersman whose flair and long blond locks turned him into a top Wild West Show attraction. Others like Hoot Gibson, a rodeo champ who could master a Hollywood agent as well as he did a Brahman bull, became matinee heroes. Johnny Weissmuller, an Olympic swimming star, became king of the cinema jungle. Even Babe Ruth, the Sultan of Swat, took a swing at the movies.

Yet, who would have thought that Pac-Man, the gallant gobbler of the videogame world, could chomp his way into a new career on television as

the star of his own Saturday morning cartoon series?

It takes some kind of creative genius, or an unabashed carny showman, to dream that up. It helps to be both.

Well, the culprits responsible for turning Pac-Man into a television star do combine both qualities plus, they are as much a cornerstone of their industry as Pac-Man is in the arcade business. The culprits, of course, are Joe Barbera and Bill Hanna of Hanna-Barbera fame, the pioneers and titans of Saturday morning television. They are the only guys who have ever given Walt Disney sustained, hard-edged competition in animation.



JUMPMAN'S A GREAT GAME. BUT YOU'VE GOT TO WATCH YOUR STEP.



Meet the Alienators. A fiendish bunch who've planted bombs throughout your Jupiter Command Headquarters.

Your job? Use your lightning speed to scale ladders, scurry across girders, climb ropes and race through 30 levels to defuse the bombs before they go off.

That's the kind of hot, non-stop action we've packed into the award-winning*, best-selling Jumpman, and into Jumpman Jr., our new cartridge version with 12 all-new, different and exciting screens.

Both games force you to make tough choices.

Should you avoid that Alienator, climb to the top

and try to work your way down, or try to hurdle him and defuse the bombs closest to you before they go off?

If you move fast you'll earn extra lives. But if you're not careful, it's a long way down. So jump to it. And find out why Jumpman and Jumpman Jr. are on a level all their own.

One to four players; 8 speeds; joystick control. Jumpman has 30 screens. Jumpman Jr. has 12 screens.



EPYX
COMPUTER SOFTWARE

STRATEGY GAMES FOR THE ACTION-GAME PLAYER.

*1983 C E S award winner



Looking back three decades, when soaring costs of theatrical cartoons forced the closing of most animation studios in Hollywood, Hanna and Barbera, who had won seven Oscars for their "Tom and Jerry" cartoons at MGM, developed a less expensive product for TV. Their new, limited animation, stressed plot and action, abandoning much of the time-consuming and expensive details of movement and backgrounds. They ushered in a new era of children's cartoon programming.

Their roomful of Emmys have been won with such clever and groundbreaking characters as Ruff and Reddy, Huckleberry Hound, the Flintstones (which was the first animated series in prime-time) and Scooby Doo (which, after 12 years of new episodes, is the longest running cartoon series in network history). More Emmys were garnered with specials that mixed live-action and animation, like "The New Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" and "Jack and the Beanstalk."

Hanna-Barbera's latest character is Pac-Man. But how exactly do you turn a videogame into a hit cartoon series? The "Pac-Man" show, airing on Saturday morning on ABC-TV, appears deceptively simple, but getting it there was anything but easy. Keeping it on the air is a whole other ballgame.

"The name of the game in entertainment is to not only keep up with the kids, but to stay ahead of them," explains Joe Barbera, an easy-going perceptive man who, unlike George Lucas, the creator of "Star Wars", is comfortable with his success. "Kids today are a whole new breed from when I was growing up. The kids today are into electronics and computer technology. From four-years-old on up, they have a veneer of acumen and a sophistication that makes it ridiculous

PAC-MAN

to do shows like we've done in the past. I hear top executives in our industry saying that something is too sophisticated, and I have to say, 'Wait a minute. Would you mind going out and talking to the kids?' They're so sharp and so aware, that they won't go for the old cat and mouse chases that we've always done.

"The electronic revolution has turned our lives upside down, and has changed the face of entertainment forever. Plus, it develops what I call a short attention span in kids. The kids today have so much to choose from, that you have to give them something new and exciting all the time. Some-

thing different, something that's happening right now."

Enter Pac-Man.

At an ABC network meeting two years ago, the idea was brought up to do a cartoon show based on an arcade game. "Pac-Man was the biggest thing in the world," reflects Barbera. "And when it came up, the network said, 'Yeah, we'd be interested. Can you get the rights?' And I said, 'Let's go do it.'"

Hanna-Barbera immediately began the long months of negotiating with Bally/Midway Manufacturing Co., the owners of *Pac-Man*, for the rights. Once convinced that Hanna-Barbera was the right outfit for the job, Bally/Midway wanted to know what they were going to do with the character.

And that is when the obstacles started cropping up like the ghosts on the *Pac-Man* arcade game.

"Here's a videogame with computer graphics and electronic sound effects, and you have to take it out of that arena and create a totally different arena. Creatively, the owners

wanted *Pac-Man* to be done exactly as in the arcade game, using the same characters that you see painted on the sides of the machine. We said that they wouldn't work, that they were too limiting and old-fashioned and they snorted, 'How dare you say that?'

We argued that we had to translate and adapt the characters so that they would work in a continuing series, so that they would work for us and for the network, and also for the owners. We had to please everybody."

Once the rights were obtained, the first major stumbling block came from the F.C.C., that sometimes benign but often tyrannical ruler of the commercial air waves. The F.C.C. rules are very strict about television shows based on a product in the marketplace. If the series is too much like the original, the F.C.C. deems it



PITSTOP™ WHERE WINNING IS THE PITS.



You'll never make Grand Prix champion just driving in circles.

You've got to stop sometime. The question is when. Right now you're in the lead. But the faster you go, the more gas you consume. And the quicker your tires wear down.

If you do pull into the pits, though, you lose precious seconds. So it's up to you to make sure the pit crew is quick with those tires. And careful with that gas. Otherwise, poof! you're out of the race.

See your retailer for available computer formats.

So what'll it be, Mario? Think your tires will hold up for another lap? Or should you play it safe and go get some new ones?

Think it over. Because Pitstop™ is the one and only road race game where winning is more than just driving. It's the pits.

Goggles not included.

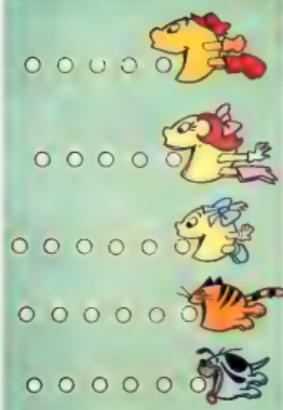
One or two players; 6 racecourses,
joystick control.



EPYX
COMPUTER SOFTWARE

STRATEGY GAMES FOR THE ACTION-GAME PLAYER.





The Pac-Family does what they know best.

advertising. And that is a humungous no-no.

Barbera remembers it all with a chuckle. "Once it was clear we were going to do *Pac-Man*, the first thing we had to do was to not do *Pac-Man*. The problem we faced was creating the same show as the game, but radically different from the actual arcade game, so that it wouldn't be considered advertising. We had to get completely away from even the hint of commerciality. That's where we started."

"We couldn't use the sound effects that everyone who plays *Pac-Man* has

PAC-MAN

engrained in their brains. We had to simulate it to avoid advertising the game. See how easy they made it for us?"

But it wasn't just the F.C.C. and the owners who laid down creative obstacles. The ABC network had their own stringent guidelines.

"Next came Network's Programs and Practices," continues Barbera good naturedly, "and they said we can't show the eating of the characters on-screen. It's too violent. So, how do you do that when it's the central action of the game? We had to invent a new way of doing it so there is no pain, gore or violence. We did it with a little magic, where little bubbles pop up whenever they do that, and then they're immediately restored. They're not really human, you see."

The actual creation of the show began with the characters.

"First of all you design the characters themselves, the way they are going to look on-screen. We designed Mr. Pac-Man, a Ms. Pac-Man, and we created a Baby Pac, a Baby Pop-Pac, a Kitty Pac and all that stuff."

"We then had to create a new *Pac-Man* world, with buildings and trees. We designed round buildings with round doorways because the characters are round. We had to design what

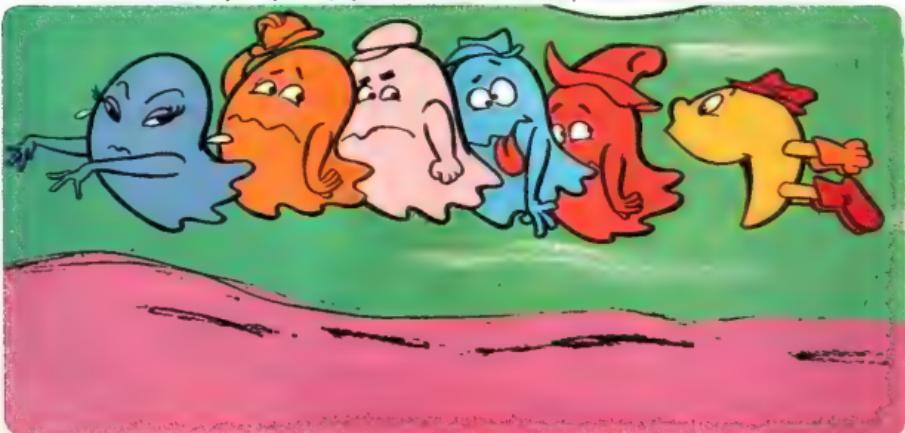


Mezmaron puts an evil spell on the Pacs.

they eat and some kind of stress factor to keep the show moving. We used the ghosts from the game, who in our show are sent there by the heavy, who we created. What they want is simply to get the power pellets that *Pac-Man* eats and give him his power. Now when you take the arcade game, there are these little electronic gimmicks going around. We took it out of that realm and created an entertaining piece of television without losing the ambience of the game, and still made it work."

The key to making any show work is personality. But how do you instill per-

Inky, Blinky & Company never seem to be able to stand up to the ole Gobbler.



WELCOME TO APSHAI. YOU'RE JUST IN TIME FOR LUNCH.



Boy, have you taken a wrong turn. One moment you're gathering treasure and the next you're being eyed like a side of beef. You're in the Gateway to Apshai.™ The new cartridge version of the Computer Game of the Year,* Temple of Apshai.™

Gateway has eight levels. And over 400 dark, nasty chambers to explore. And because it's joystick controlled, you'll have to move faster than ever. But first you'll have to consider your strategy.

*Game Manufacturers Association, 1981

Is it treasure you're after? Or glory? You'll live longer if you're greedy, but slaying monsters racks up a higher score.

The Apshai series is the standard by which all other adventure games are judged. And novices will not survive.

They'll be eaten.

One player; Temple of Apshai, disk/cassette; Gateway to Apshai, cartridge, joystick control.



STRATEGY GAMES FOR THE ACTION-GAME PLAYER.



sonality into a round, yellow, electronic-eating graphic?

"Once you've designed the characters, you bring in all kinds of people to test their voices," reveals Barbera. "And you keep testing voices until you find the one that works. The voice for Mr. Pac-Man is, of course, Marty Ingels, who's done a lot of work for us in the past."

"The key to a voice is, if you're listening to it and it makes you smile, and it's kind of funny, it works. Sometimes when we're casting voices, and we have the network people there, I'll just play a tape with a lot of voice tests, without any identification as to who they are. When we went by Marty's voice, everybody asked about it but, we kept going, and after we were done, someone said, 'Let's go back to that particular one.' I knew that if I had told them the voice belonged to Marty Ingles, they'd immediately get a picture of Marty in their minds, and that's who they'd be thinking of when they heard the voice. Now, Marty has a gravelly quality to his voice that's very funny. And that voice is what supplies character and personality to Mr. Pac-Man. Half of your success with any cartoon character is selecting the right voice."

The first season of the Pac-Man car-

PAC-MAN

toon series was a hit for ABC. And for Hanna-Barbera, the *Pac-Man* videogame didn't fair quite as well in the video marketplace. In an arena which has been glutted by hundreds of new videogames, all marketed in fiercely competitive ways, *Pac-Man* sales took a nose dive.

"I don't know why it wasn't expected," surmises Barbera sagely. "It's like I've said, the attention span of kids doesn't hold. What *Pac-Man* has going for it, is that it was one of the first to take off. It's solid, a cornerstone, but they've come up with all kinds of new games to grab the kids I've seen a lot of the new ones, and I can't even describe them, but *Pac-Man* you know and understand."

Barbera admits that he subscribes to **Electronic Games**, in an attempt to keep up. "But when you go down a whole row of machines at the arcade, they're really all the same. So the problem is, with the arcade games, as with the cartoon show, how do you sustain your audience?"

ABC has ordered new *Pac-Man* epi-

sodes for the 1983-'84 season, and Hanna-Barbera is geared up to deliver a second season. "The minute they do that, you know that they have confidence in you and you were successful. If they don't order new shows, the merchandising people disappear and all that marketing support that is so necessary to survival is gone. If you don't have that these days, you're in trouble."

"Our problem now is how to keep the audience we've built up. We've recently introduced a Super-Pac character and a smart aleck nephew, not exactly a Fonzie character, but smart and cool like all teenagers want to be. What you have to do, like with any television show, is keep evolving and creating new elements. You have to let the show grow with your audience. Our super hero *Pac-Man* character is the kind of guy who shows up to rescue somebody and forgets why he's there. So we infuse a little comedy. You can't do that with the arcade game. They're limited by the virtue of their technology. We're not. So actually, we have an advantage."

And if you judge the future success of the *Pac-Man* series by Hanna-Barbera's past success, it's possible that *Pac-Man* will enjoy a long run as a television star.



Barbera feels the cartoon program can grow with the times and remain a top-notch kiddie show.



GIVE YOUR KIDS A LESSON THEY'LL NEVER FORGET.



When kids have fun and learn at the same time, they're more likely to remember more of what they've learned. What's more, when they associate the two together — learning becomes an enjoyable activity. So they'll do more of it.

That's the basic principle behind the Learning Fun Series from EPYX.

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Fun with Music™ is designed to appeal to both you and your children. It comes with a songbook and has two modes of play. In the first mode, you can enter songs from the songbook — or compose your own. Then

play the songs back, adding or removing notes and changing tempo or key. Your computer is like a musical instrument with memory, and you see every note of it displayed on your screen.

The second mode lets you play your song in a fun-filled action game. You control a drum major trying to touch the notes before a small but pesky poodle catches up to him and slows down the parade.

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Fun with Art brings out the artist in you, no matter what your age!

MORE LEARNING FUN ON THE WAY.

These two are the first of an extensive series of Learning Fun games we have planned. Look for these, as well as other EPYX titles, wherever computer software is sold.





5200 VS COLECOVISION: A GAMER'S OPINION

In your opinion, which one is better: the ColecoVision or the 5200? I think ColecoVision has terrible, cheaply-built controllers. They're much harder to use than Intellivision keypads. ColecoVision has another fault, too. If three objects are on the same Y-axis, one of the objects either flickers or

almost disappears. For a third-wave system, I think ColecoVision is a joke.

Ashok Pennmatcha
Taylor Ridge, IL

Ed: Well, your opinion is obvious, anyway! As far as which system is better, it's purely a matter of opinion. Stay tuned for an upcoming feature, in which we'll evaluate the ColecoVision against the 5200...one year after their releases.

THE VCS AN ATARI PLOT?

Please give us subscribers our money's worth by giving every VCS

Anonymous

Warner Robins, GA

Ed: Intellivision and ColecoVision are systems with higher resident memories, but that doesn't mean the VCS is a bad game playing machine. As long as our Reader Polls keep showing a strong interest in VCS game reviews, we'll keep printing them. If you'd rather hear about other game or computer systems, fill out the Reader Poll and let us know.

GETTING IT STRAIGHT

On page 50 of your September issue, you mistakenly showed Imagic's Dracula for the ColecoVision instead of the Intellivision version. Also, on page 103, you mixed up Space Dungeon and Kangaroo for the Atari 5200.

John Slupski
Address unknown

PANS INTELLIVISION JOYSTICK

Thanks for the attention you've given to gourmet joysticks. One stick you didn't cover was the Mattel Tron joystick. I wish you had. My friend bought one because it looks good. It looks good, but that's all. The joystick just isn't responsive enough on many games like Adventures of Tron and Deadly Discs.

Keith Cooke
Stafford, VA

COIN-OP STRATEGY HINTS

In Atan's Star Wars, concentrate on hitting the Tie Fighters' bullets before going for the spaceships themselves.



POLE POSITION (ATARI COIN-OP)

Try to stay in the inside lane as much as possible when playing Pole Position. This gives you more time to cross the finish line.

Brent Busboom
Reno, NV

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SCORE: 097354

FUEL :

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SCORE: 237415

FUEL :

Destroying母星 will give you points.母星会自动向你靠近。

Buck Rogers, Planet of Zoom. Your one chance to defeat the toughest enemy of all. Time.

If you've played Buck Rogers, Planet of Zoom in the arcades, you've had a taste of what space chase action is all about. Now maybe you're ready for something even better.

A home game that takes the arcade version and makes it even faster, more challenging, more fun.

You'll battle your way through 3-D space. Maneuver through bullet-firing magnetic poles and alien saucers. Shoot it out with hopping droids and enemy fighters until you face the ultimate challenge, the mother ship.

But time is not on your side. You have to be fast to destroy the mother ship. If you're too slow, kiss mother goodbye.

Look for Buck Rogers at your local store. But hurry. This is one game that's really moving fast.

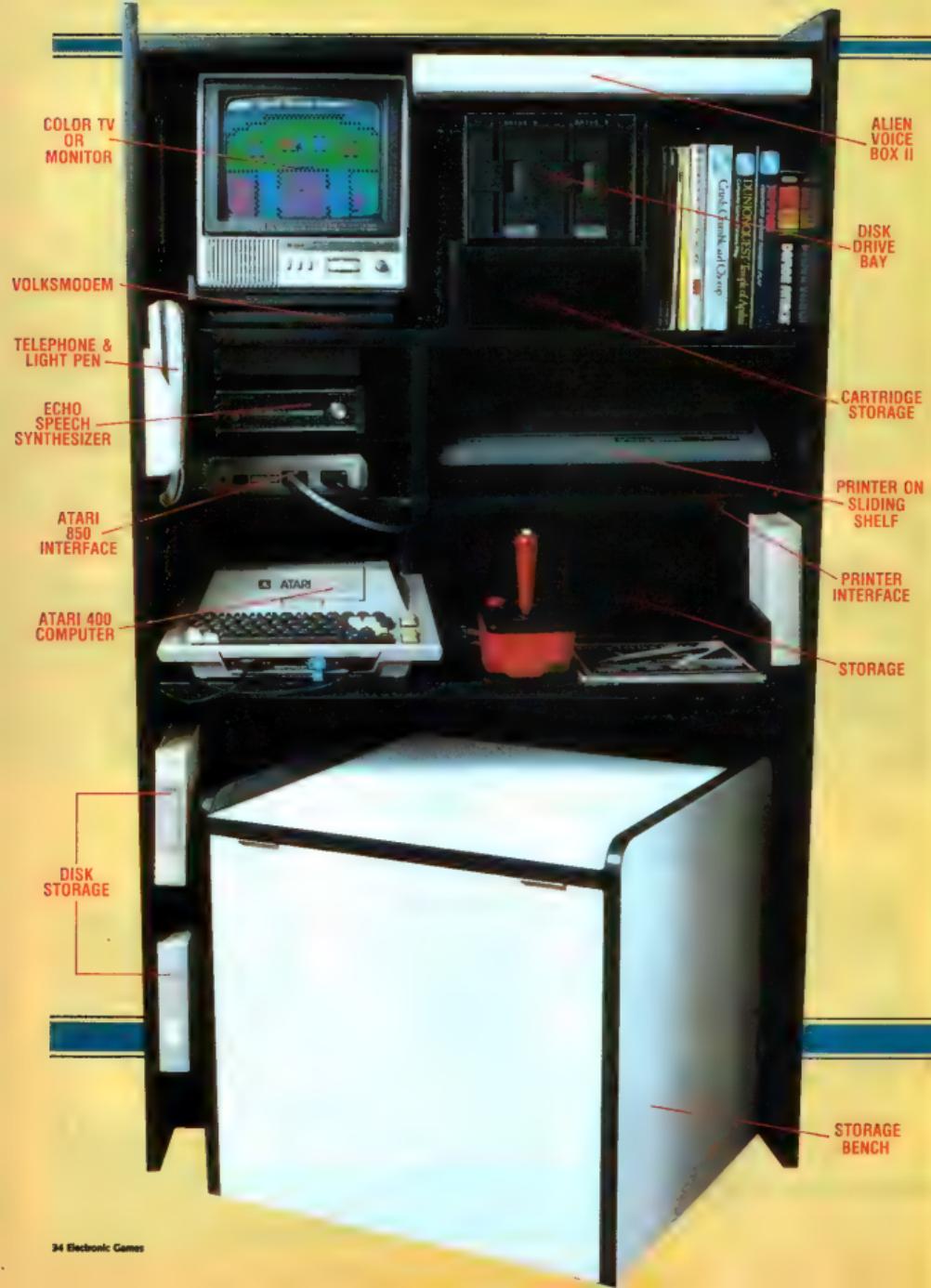
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Computers,
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and VIC-20™ Texas
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SEGAWORLD
The Arcade Winners.

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This project began life as the "Ultimate Atari 400". It has grown into the ultimate computer game station. Although EG has previously designed equipment for gamers to drool over, (See "The Ultimate Gaming Gift", December, 1982) it is the first time we enlisted the aid of a major manufacturer to help create a totally new product. Lastly, we planned to feature this design concept in the December 1982 issue but alas, as we kept on improving, time was disapproving. Instead of compromising, we opted to reveal all in this month, instead.

The station is the first computer center that is both compact enough to fit almost anywhere and is completely self-contained. Within its boundaries lies an extremely powerful (80K) color computer, a color TV, high-capacity dual disk drives, two speech synthesizers, a light pen, a modem and telephone, a complete printer station, storage areas for 50 cartridges and 60 disks, built-in lighting and a power-strip. The rolling cube, primarily designed for seating, is hinged at the top to provide 4 cu. ft. of additional storage. Amazingly, the entire unit is barely 31-in. wide. Now, before someone dies of curiosity, let's look at the components that made it all possible.

The station is centered on an Atari 400 outfitted with a Mosaic Select 64 RAM crimp, an Inhome Software B Key 400 keyboard and a Microbits Peripheral Products Printer Interface. We selected these products, and all others, based on the criteria of price and performance. The Mosaic board provides the computer with a true user-addressable 64K of RAM. To



Here it is in all its glory—the ultimate computer game station. Note how every major component is in easy reach for printing.

achieve this, the unit features the traditional hard-wired 48K of memory and 16K of additional memory stored in four, 4K RAM banks. A simple poke command accesses these banks so that a total of 64K is available.

The operating and I/O systems are left intact, and if added to the RAM provided by the Select unit, produce the 80K configuration. Installation is simple and straightforward. Often, it will be solderless, but some owners will have to solder depending on how closely Atari has trimmed the leads emanating from the motherboards. Installation of the 8 Key 400 keyboard is

a straight Remove and Replace operation although the ribbon connector used is troublesome to seat properly. A short circuit condition arose after several days of use when a jumper cable employed in the keyboard frayed its insulation. There won't be any problem if all jumpers used are well-insulated or clear the board by a fraction of an inch. A simple chip replacement has the printer interface up and running within minutes.

The Atari 400 was selected, because many of EG's readers currently own one, and the cost of the unit has become insignificant. If, however, you don't own an Atari computer and want to purchase one, we recommend the 800 as the place to start. It comes equipped with a reasonable keyboard and with 48K of on-board RAM, doesn't require retrofitting to provide countless hours of gaming and programming power and pleasure. At its current street price of \$200.00, it is unquestionably the best buy in home computers. The Microbits Printer Interface eliminates the need for the relatively expensive Atari 850 Interface but if you own an 850, forget we even mentioned it. The current cost of our modified 400 is \$240.00 without the Microbits product, and about \$320.00 with it. With 800's priced so low, the choice is tough as the pure Atari product provides a better keyboard and a monitor output for less money, while the EG Atari 400 gives 16K of additional memory but only an RF (TV) output. Either Atari computer, or most other small home computers, for that matter, will comfortably fit in the cabinetry, however, so if your interests

THE ULTIMATE GAMING GIFT

EG Engineers A State-of-the-Art Computer Gaming Station

THE ULTIMATE GAMING GIFT

lie elsewhere, don't leave us yet.

With all that power available, there's no current Atari game that can't be played on this system. But to get those games up and running you really need a disk drive. Having auditioned several drives, including Atari's own 810, we selected the superb Percom RFD 44-52. This is a dual drive, double side, double density system for the price-is-no-object crowd

By now it must be obvious that EG intended to create a model system capable of performing virtually any task in the world of home computing. Given the high cost of many of these components, however, we are also providing many options along the way. You can get by with less RAM although 48K is the minimum. EG recommends. The power of 700K of mass storage is unnecessary unless

origin and so we had to content ourselves with running the software only. Judging from the menu, it looks extremely powerful. Microbits has created communications software that emulates a great many functions of a "smart" modem. It simplifies up and down loading and contains nine buffers and a built-in editor to keep things humming along. By the time you read this, the company should be marketing a modem that connects directly to the phone jack.

The only reservation we have about MPP products is the relatively high (\$200.00) list price of the modem. For that kind of money, a Hayes Smartmodem is within range. Unless you can get an MPP-1000 at a substantial discount, the value is questionable. But if you don't own an 850 interface, this is the only modem we know of that operates without one.

To furnish the station with a working modem, and to get a crack at the lowest cost unit around, Anchor Automation supplied us with its latest product—Volksmodem. This is a super-low-cost device (retailing for about \$65.00) that can service almost any computer. The trick lies in its operating simplicity and the use of customized cables. Two slide switches on the modem are user-operable. One selects half or full duplex operation, while the other is a voice/data switch. Tones generated by the modem aid in revealing operational status as the unit automatically selects the originate or answer mode. In use, the modem seems to work well and is simplicity itself to operate. It does not come with software and so the total cost of the package is variable. Still it is cheap, compact, and guaranteed for life.

The Tech-Sketch LP-15 precision light pen is a miniature marvel and comes supplied with software. Just load the program, plug the pen into joystick port #4 and away you go. The program is the only weak link as it is written in BASIC and so is therefore slightly slow to respond. We prefer machine language programs which we are told are on the way. As of this writing the company has announced a line of improved software packages but even in their absence, we can totally recommend this unit. It isn't cheap since it lists at \$139.95, but it



In this shot, note the paper shelves. With just a push and a flip they vanish.

as the unit retails at discount for about \$1000.00. Obviously you needn't go that far to play games, but if you are a programmer or crave convenience, this is the drive system of choice. We expect that Percom's other drives will prove just as desirable, although we can't say for sure without hands-on experience. The unit comes with the OS/A+ operating system, a DOS designed for the almost 700K capacity of the dual drives. One particularly noteworthy feature of this new DOS is that it allows software configuration of the drives. The drives may also be set by a rear mounted DIP switch.

you plan to program. The minimum requirement is a single sided, single density drive.

And if you own an 850 interface, the Microbits Printer Interface is unnecessary. However, if you're starting from scratch, as we did, you might want to check out this unit and one other Microbit creation. Their MPP-1000 modem connects directly to joystick port #4 and does not require an 850 either. We could not actually test this unit because the modem must be inserted in the telephone line between the body of the phone and the receiver. All our phones are of non-Bell



When you play Congo Bongo you'll die laughing.

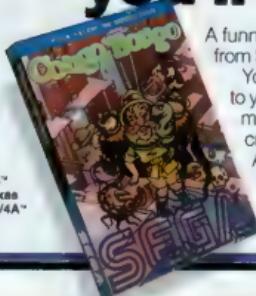
A funny thing happens when you play Congo Bongo, the new home game from Sega. In fact, a lot of funny things happen.

You have to get to Congo, the mighty ape, before the jungle beasts get to you. Dodge falling coconuts as you scale Monkey Mountain. Shake the monkey from your back and chase Congo onto the lagoon screen. Then cross the water on the backs of hippos, lily pads and hunter-eating fish. And do it all before Congo makes a monkey out of you.

But watch your step — one slip and it's off to hunter heaven.

Congo Bongo. Straight from the arcade and into your home. It's more fun than a barrel of, well, monkeys.

Made for:
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Atari® Home
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THE ULTIMATE GAMING GIFT



In this closeup readers should note the modem, speech synthesizer and interface below the monitor. To the right are disk drives, a cartridge storage area and the printer.

is extremely good and worth the cost.

As mentioned earlier, the unit has two speech synthesizers. Why two? Our favorite for the Atari computer is the Voice Box II from The Alien Group. This is a seemingly simple little black box (retail is about \$100.00) that thinks it's a printer. It plugs into the Atari serial port and talks through your TV's loudspeaker. It comes with two disks full of programs and can entertain for hours. Games, simple text to speech, and a wonderful moving face and singing program round out the package. The ease of running the unit will delight novices while programmers will have a field day inputting all manner of craziness. Games that talk, faces that sing, and if you're good enough, perhaps a real test-to-speech program. But if you require the latter, the Echo Speech Synthesizer at \$300.00 is for you. The unit contains its own amplifier and speaker and is easily connected to the 850 interface device. We prefer the Echo to its competition because it sounds a bit more human and is more easily understood.

When it comes to printers, the best price/value combination on the mar-

ket is the Gorilla Banana from Leading Edge. The unit is currently street priced at \$200.00 and it works. Print quality, while not up to the standards of the best dot matrix units, is more than satisfactory. Built by Seiksha, a division of Seiko, it is a high quality unit throughout. If you crave an 80-column printer and can live with a moderately fast 50 CPS printing speed, buy the Banana.

You may have noticed, in the illustrations, a compact color monitor sitting in the cabinet. Well it isn't a monitor, it's a portable AC/DC 9-in. color TV marketed by Magnavox. We opted for this unit based on size, performance, appearance and price. The set now sells for about \$270.00. That's higher than some "real" monitors, but it can be taken and played anywhere. Double duty is the key. Picture quality is particularly good and, with the 400's RF output, exemplary. The only drawback to the set is relatively low brightness, but when you're staring at a screen all day, this may become a benefit. We recommend you try the set with a computer attached — its broadcast reception is excellent — and

then you can judge for yourself.

Lastly, only a touch of modesty prevents screaming from the rooftops "we did it!" but the cabinet that makes the whole system work is nothing short of stupendous. Engineered and built for this magazine by Wood-Rack Technologies, the yet unnamed EG Computer Station is a brilliant example of compactness, versatility and convenience. Wood-Rack is well known for its heavy duty construction and lack of visible hardware. Moreover the unit assembles without tools. It is simply fitted together. The result is a cabinet strong enough to endure anything even the youngest gamers can conjure up. This thing is a tank. More important, it's fitted with a sliding drawer for the printer, a folding table for paper reception, hidden wiring compartments for neatness, special storage racks for disks, and a fully protected compartment for cartridges. Other touches you may miss include a blackened compartment for the monitor, a white roofed compartment for the printer and keyboard, wire storage units on the rear of the cabinet, optional casters for rolling the unit about and a spacious storage bench. There's even a turntable to facilitate adjusting the TV for maximum picture quality. Actually the list goes on but you get the idea. While a firm price for the cabinet has not been established, it is expected to retail for \$350.00, perhaps \$50.00 more for the bench.

While the unit is designed to house the specific equipment contained, it is also set up for maximum versatility. Most home computers will fit in without any problem, as will many small printers. The disk bay will hold two horizontal units or a cassette recorder. The paper shelf is strong enough to support additional disk drives or another computer, etc.

So that's the 1984 edition of the ultimate computer station. Suggestions and comments are welcomed as we would like to continue this project until nothing conceivable can be added. If you are interested in the cabinet, contact Wood-Rack Technologies at: (212) 768-3835 or 768-3861 and no, EG has no vested interest in this project other than the desire to better the breed. ☐

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GAMES ON DISC

What's Next for Games on Videodisc?

By LES PAUL ROBLEY and BILL KUNKEL

The dust kicked up by Don Bluth/Cinematronics' coin-op smash, *Dragon's Lair*, hasn't even begun to settle — more likely, it is continuing to rise — and it's already time to start looking at what's coming next.

Dragon's Lair was a curious success, right from the beginning. Certainly, heading into 1983, few industry insiders would have figured the "Next Big Arcade Game" to come from the bankrupt Cinematronics. The El Cajon coin-op company has been an invisible, if revolutionary, entity in terms of industry recognition for almost a decade.

Actually, Cinematronics introduced vector graphics to arcades with the seminal space shoot-out *Star Hawk*, and produced the cult favorite *Space Castle*. Alas, vector graphics were perceived as a "fad" among arcade tastemakers when games such as *Zaxxon* were taking the traditional raster-scan graphics to the limits.

Cinematronics was left with a lot of

vector monitors, however, and doggedly bucked the tide with a continuing trickle of largely-ignored videogames. The wind-up seemed imminent when Cinematronics went Chapter 11.

Don Bluth, a former Disney animator, was sitting around during all of this, buried in the ashes of his own major failure. Bluth and a few other Disney creative people left Uncle Walt's wing to try and fly on their own with the enchanting "The Secret of NIMH". The result, at the box office, was disastrous.

So, of course, these two forces managed to intersect long enough to make videogame history. What else?

In many ways, however, this seemingly haphazard fate is a lot more prosaic than it first appears. Who else but a company such as Cinematronics, on the ropes, slipping toward the canvas with Mr. T waiting above just in case it did get up, dare produce a laser-disc-technology based coin-op?

It is in the nature of laserdisc videogames that they will be "convertible", that is, the arcade owner will be able to buy a new disc, change the signs around, and, voila!, he's got a brand new machine.

Convertible coin-ops have been pretty much an anathema amongst the coin-op giants. "It's the nature of our industry," explains a spokesman for Bally-Midway, "that we need to make every videogame a new machine. Aesthetically, we can create each new cabinet so that it offers unique lathework and, technologically, we can make the post state-of-the-art breakthroughs in sound and graphics, only by taking in major revenue for each new coin-op. These convertible coin-ops are generic videogames, they show mediocre graphics and warmed-over game ideas. That is not what this field needs."

Yet *Dragon's Lair* is a whole new ballgame. In early showings, according to *Replay* magazine, arcades

Cinematronics' *Dragon's Lair* was the first of the laserdisc games, but it has strong competition.



boasting the then-hard to get *Dragon's Lair* were up an average of \$30 per night on all videogames. The industry has been virtually without a dominant title since *Pac-Man*. A look at the top 10 earners makes an ardent feel like he has wandered into the past — *Galaga*, *Ms. Pac-Man* and *Millipede* represent some of the younger blood on the list!

In the summer of '83, only Atari's *Star Wars* was in the same lair as our dragon, with the first animated videogame drawing attention in virtually every medium. It was an explosion a long time in detonation.

Five years earlier, a designer named Rick Dyer had his AMS crew working on a concept for telling a story using a home videogame process with players making decisions that affected the outcome of the story. AMS completed several prototype storyboards on scrolls, which they took to Bluth.

"A computer selected the correct scene on the scrolls," explains Bluth. "It was a very crude approach, and when I look at the process today it reminds me of a Rube Goldberg machine of the '80s. Nevertheless, we thought it a splendid idea in terms of marrying art with science, one which would not only help the sliding videogame market, but benefit the floundering animation industry as well."

GAMES ON DISC

It worked. Utilizing an industrial Pioneer Laserdisc (which Cinematronics had to wheedle from the warehouses in which they remained, unsold) the game offered rapid search, using a laser beam in lieu of an actual needle, allowing the beam to scan the entire record in order to bring up the scene that is the logical result of the player's action commands. There is still, of course, a slight time lag, but it is not an insoluble problem, and future games may circumvent it entirely.

Ah, yes, future games.

Bluth already has several projects under development. *Space Ace* involves a super hero who is reduced to an infant named Dexter by the evil "Infanto Ray" (shades of *Flash Gordon*). In his child form, Dexter boards a spaceship and pursues the evil alien villain, a creature called Borf who has kidnapped his girlfriend and threatens

to reduce all of earth to screaming infants.

If the player, as Dexter, makes all the right moves, he gains points. Earn enough points and the screen will glow reddish, beeps will sound, and letters will say "energize." If the player opts to energize, he will turn back into Space Ace with only 12 seconds to use that form. Like *Pac-Man*, *Space Ace* can now meet even greater dangers, earning higher points. Or the player can remain as Dexter, pursuing a safer route and consequently earning fewer points.

"Unlike *Dragon's Lair*, *Space Ace* will have a branching capability whereby players decide how they want to go through the game," announced Bluth. The branching element gives them the opportunity of becoming two different personalities. Again, the new game will feature a joystick plus an action button.

"We tried to keep it simple this way," added Bluth. "If you make controls too complicated, the game loses its fun. Players should concentrate mainly on what they see on the screen."

New techniques will also be employed in the animation process. More multiplanes will be used (truckng shots present no problems with laser-disc), as well as actual miniatures for backgrounds a la Max and Dave Fleis-

Cinematronics' next laserdisc offering will be *Space Ace*, starring Dexter as the hero.





Which player is winging his way to victory?

When *Joust** flies into your living room you might think you're in the arcade. Because, just like the arcade, this *Joust* is a duel to the finish. But remember that some jousts are worth more than others. The knight on the right, for example, is about to score 500 points for landing a red Bounder. But the knight on the left will score three times as many for skewering a blue Shadow Lord. That ought to needle his opponent.

You can spear yourself a lot more points. Especially in the Egg Wave. Pick up as many eggs as you can before they hatch. The first egg's worth 250 points, the second 500, the third 750, and the fourth 1,000 points.

Only Atari makes *Joust* for the ATARI® 2600™ Game, Sears Video Arcade® systems, and versions exclusively for the ATARI 5200™ SuperSystem and all ATARI Home Computers.

So mount your ostrich and descend on your nearest store. For *Joust*.

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cher. Using a periscope camera in front of the model and dolling laterally will impart an added 3-dimensional realism to the backgrounds.

"We found we needed that kind of look to help players know when to react and size up what the danger is," added Gary Goldman, Don Bluth's animation director (Bluth's own studio is manufacturing the models.)

Bluth foresees future breakthroughs with laserdisc interactives, some of which should appear in two year's time. One will be the ability to place the animation on any background desired, not unlike the travelling matte processes used on motion pictures. The backgrounds might be on a separate laserdisc and put together via computer, without the need for expensive matting. We may even come across games whereby a move to the right would invite a totally different

GAMES ON DISC

upfront for the license, with plans to couple their ColecoVision game console to a home laserdisc player. Coleco is supposedly on the brink of developing a disc player attachment that will hook into their unit for approximately \$150 or less. It should utilize the same digital joystick controller and action buttons featured on the keypad.

According to Goldman, the home version will contain the same animation graphics used in the present arcade format, since no picture information or memory losses occur in disc translation. The actual disc player, though, may be stylus rather than laser to reduce cost. The game won't be available until next year — the main reason — so it doesn't compete with arcade owners trying to recoup investments made on the coin-op. Coleco has also purchased first right of refusal for future Bluth games produced



adventure. Or, the ability will exist to move the figure regardless of the action or threat. This would obviously increase the illusion that the player has total control of the animated character.

"There can never be total control with laserdisc," cautioned Goldman, "or any videogame that's out there now. It's only the illusion of total control which we hope to increase in the future over the present game. In *Dragon's Lair*, our basic approach was to entertain, to capture an audience's imagination. By being the first one out there and possessing the quality of graphics it has, I think *Dragon's Lair* has excited that audience. It's also forced game manufacturers to look a little differently at the future of electronic gaming."

"What we offer is a 'window of the future', a means by which gamers can

In Bally Midway's *Astron Belt*, gamers will find an interesting blend of videogame graphics and film footage.

play movies. Down the road, I think we'll see more film companies approach videogames via their own film productions. Rather than take the character from a film and create a game around it, they will take the movie and at the same time produce a game based on the actual live-action or animation from the film."

A home version of the current *Dragon's Lair* is underway at Coleco Industries. The top selling game manufacturer paid an incredible \$2 million

under the Starcom banner. Success in the homes once again depends on the consumer's investment in videodisc hardware.

Naturally, a sequel to *Lair* is already in the works, this one using a reverse motif, in which the player battles the knight, Dirk the Daring, by manipulating the various menaces he confronts.

Bluth and Cinematronics aren't the only ones involved in laserdisc coin-ops, and the home rights to same. Bally/Midway recently jumped into the fray by acquiring Sega Enterprises and their laserdisc game — *Astron Belt*. After many changes, *Astron Belt*, a multiple-scenario shoot-'em-up, features actual miniature film footage. In this fast-paced game, the arcader's spaceship battles the bad guys in outer space, within space station tunnels, and between canyon walls, as well as strafes ground targets.

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Commodore VIC-20 or 64, Sears Telegame, Atari 400, 800, 1200, 1600 or 2600, TI-99 personal computer. There's even one JOY-SENSOR for Colecovision! It even works on Adam; so no finger has to miss out on the fun. So kick the stick habit. Get your Suncom Joy-Sensor at the new JOY-SENSOR from Suncom.

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According to Jim Jarocki, of Bally, there are some basic differences between *Astron Belt* and *Dragon's Lair*. For one thing, the gamer will have complete control of the ship throughout the game. Because the computer doesn't branch to other scenarios every few seconds, there aren't any blackout screens.

Another difference has to do with the first seconds of play. "In *Dragon's Lair*, you can get wiped out in a couple of seconds," Jarocki says. "In *Astron Belt*, we added a timer — you can think of it as a 'protect-your-life' feature. For the first 40 to 60 seconds, the gamer's spaceship is automatically replaced if it's destroyed. It's sort of like playing with an infinite amount of ships."

The ultimate evolution of laserdisc games, as alluded to earlier, may well be in the home. With the restrictions of coin-op games being so great, especially in terms of maximum time, think how much more freedom the home medium would provide.

The average filmmaker shoots much more actual footage than is ever seen on the screen. How easy it would be to shoot alternate plot developments as a film is in process — players could actually be Luke Skywalker or Indiana Jones, and film companies will have yet another format in which to sell their wares.

Whatever may lie ahead for the interactive videodisc game, it is certainly all smiles right now. *Dragon's Lair* has the interesting distinction of being the only coin-op ever to be set, standard, at 50 cents per play, and still hit big.

With arcades alive again with the sound of tokens, tinkling merrily into coin boxes, gamers can get ready for a

GAMES ON DISC



Among the over 40 laserdisc screens in *Bega's Battle* is this cityscape. Note the superimposed graphics.

deluge of videodisc coin-ops from some of the smaller companies.

Obviously working on the philosophy that "when you ain't got nothin', you ain't got nothin' to lose", Exidy has jumped back into the videogame business with *Crossbow*, a less cartoonish adventure utilizing a mass solid state memory system with no moving parts.

Crossbow utilizes greater player-game interaction, according to Exidy's promotional releases, than a game such as *Dragon's Lair* which offers joystick directed movement and a single button to inaugurate particular

action — such as letting fly with a salvo of arrows.

Exidy promises eight scenarios for *Crossbow*, with no "dead spots" while the laser searches for the correct position.

Data East, meanwhile, kings of the generic videogame and the creators of both *BurgerTime* and *Bump 'N' Jump*, are also entering the laserdisc sweepstakes with a new coin-op dubbed *Bega's Battle*. Utilizing over 40 interactive, disc-generated screens for background and P.C.-created characters as foreground player/object surrogates, this title pits the aracker, as the powerful Bega, in a battle against those ever-popular "dark forces" intent upon ravaging and subduing mankind.

The future for videodisc games is, obviously, now. A major battle is being waged on the arcade floors, and neither side can be called "dark forces". Will the laserdisc prove a fad, a flash-in-the-pan, yesterday's papers tomorrow? Or might they, instead, overwhelm and dominate the coin-op universe with their breadth of potential subjects, forever toppling the computer-generated image from its perch at the top of the hill.

More likely, however, is the fact that laserdisc-technology will become part of the overall videogame matrix. Already, in the home market, laserdiscs such as "Murder, Anyone?" and "Many Roads to Murder" can be played simply through digitized access to numerous scenarios, sans computer.

More than any other industry, videogames have displayed a tremendous willingness to evolve with the introduction of new, augmented technology.



Bega's Battle, by Data East, pits the gamer (as the powerful Bega) against the evil powers intent on destroying mankind.

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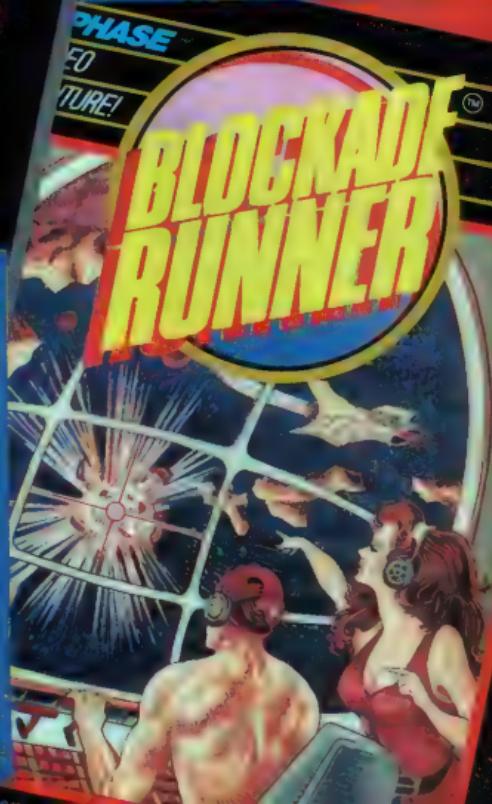
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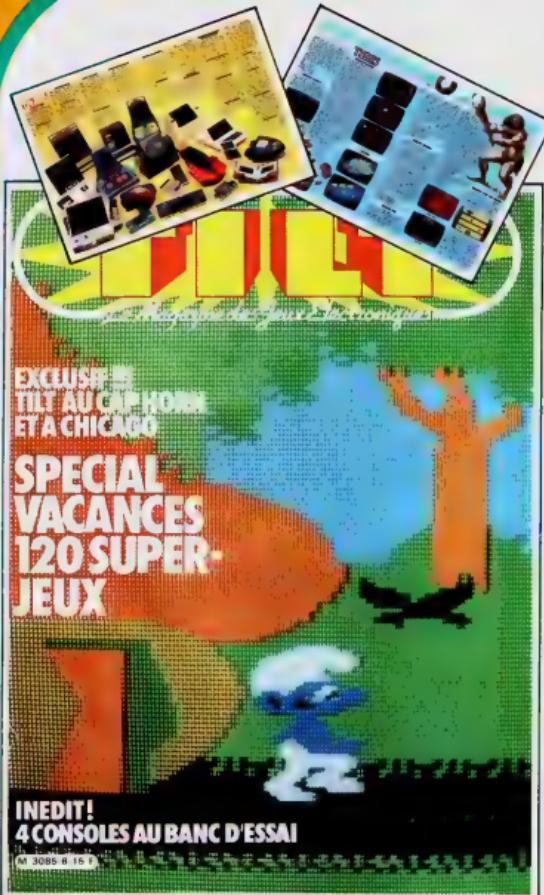
By LISA HONDEN & BILL KUNKEL

Pity the poor European electronic gaming enthusiasts!!

While North American arcaders wrestle with problems no more serious than a temporary shortage of ColecoVision cartridges or Commodore 64 software, our game-loving cousins across the Atlantic must hurdle much more serious — and basic — obstacles that stand in the way of their enjoyment of the world's fastest-growing hobby.

The information gap between the U.S. and the Continent is the main trouble. Most Europe-based electronic gamers lack access to the majority of the hardware, software, peripherals and accessories which we take for granted.

TeleMatch is the excellent German version of our own Electronic Games.



Tilt is our Gallic cousin's translation of *Electronic Games*. Although there are similarities in content, the layout is different.

Verpaßt? Das läßt sich nachholen! Die ersten drei Ausgaben der Zeitschrift für家庭用ゲームマガジン TeleMatch können Sie hier bestellten. Die weiteren Ausgaben erscheinen monatlich ab September.

Abonnement für die ersten drei Ausgaben: TeleMatch: Deutsche Ausgabe 12,- DM. Preis pro Ausgabe: 10,- DM. Versandkosten: 2,- DM. Einzelhandel: 12,- DM. Der Preis umfaßt die gesamte Abrechnung. Der Preis für die ersten drei Ausgaben ist erhöht.

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EG GOES CONTIN

Those who are lucky enough to own home systems paid through the nose to get one. The 450,000 West German families who own Atari 2600s shelled out an average of 400 Marks (roughly \$200) for their machines.

The software situation isn't much brighter. In-store game demonstrations are virtually unknown in the large department stores which do most of the home arcade retailing. Strong networks and user groups have sprung up to fill this data vacuum. It isn't unusual for a gamer to demonstrate an entire collection to a fellow enthusiast. Needless to say, word-of-mouth is the quickest route to popularity for a new title. Not only can't gamers see what they're buying in the big stores, but a prospective customer must know the title's stock number before walking in the door! (And if you

The advertisements in France's *Tilt* are slightly more risqué than our own.



think home arcading is rugged on the pocketbook, German coin-ops top out at a world-high average of \$1 per play!)

Here is a rough breakdown of game and computer system ownership in Germany, a fair index of how things are progressing in at least one videogame-entranced European nation: There are approximately 100,000 VIC-20s (Commodore has always sold well in Europe, even when it was failing in the U.S. a few years back), 100,000 Intellivisions and the previously-mentioned 450,000 Atari 2600s.

As of this writing, not one German gamer has a ColecoVision wired to his TV. And you think you've got it rough. Ha!

A major fly in the arcading ointment "over there" is the format for European television broadcasting. Since TV viewing hours begin at 5 p.m. and end at 1 a.m., family members can be found fighting for either the switch box or channel changer in a true death struggle for video supremacy. Videogames are cutting into the typical European family's long-established pattern of enjoying purely passive entertainment at certain, proscribed periods.

What do German, French, Italian, or Scandinavian araders who want to know what's going on do? Well, one beacon in the mirk has been the licensing of **Electronic Games** magazine in several European markets by a variety of publishers.

France, for example, has *Tilt*, an interesting look at the gaming scene in that country. Germany, however, has what is probably the finest European gaming publication, *Tele-Match*.

STRATEGIE



UND TAKTIK

Von FRANK TETTO JR.

This is Germany's "Strategy Session".

Tele-Match has modelled its structure very closely on **EG's** modular approach, using as many translated articles as fits that market place's readership, and gobs of the same gorgeous artwork **EG** readers enjoy each month. **T-M** is published monthly and presently uses about 10 full-time staff writers.

The differences between **EG** and its European cousins are often more enlightening than the similarities. Some use rather risqué pin-ups, ads are styled for the native culture and **Tele-Match** finds that cartoon characters work better than the established videogame characters such as **Pac-Man** and **Q*Bert**.

Even more licensing deals will be announced soon. It is not *impossible* that before long **EG** will be appearing in every language known to man. Or, as we like to say: wherever electronic gaming goes, can **EG** be far behind? ☺

ENTAL

Europe
Joins
the
Game
World

EG GAMES

TICKET TO RIDE

SPECIAL EDITION

CROSSOVER EDITION

WORLD WONDERS

WORLD WONDERS: ASIA BASIC

EG is the first German distributor of board games and card games. Through our website you can buy board games online.

EG GAMES & BILL PLANE

The game designer behind the award-winning *Ticket to Ride* series, Bill Klatt, has now created his own board game, *Bill Klatt's Ticket to Ride*. It's a strategy board game set in the early days of the 20th century, where players compete to build railroads across the United States. The game includes more than 100 cards, each featuring a route or train car, and a set of tokens representing cities and stations.

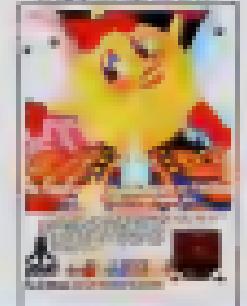
The objective of the game is to collect the most tokens and to have the most valuable railroads. The game features a variety of challenges, including building railroads, collecting tokens, and expanding your network of cities and stations.

Bill Klatt's Ticket to Ride is a great addition to any collection of board games.



Bill Klatt's Ticket to Ride is a great addition to any collection of board games. The game features a variety of challenges, including building railroads, collecting tokens, and expanding your network of cities and stations. The game is designed for 2-4 players and is suitable for ages 10 and up.

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EG GOES

CONTINENTAL

**Europe
Joins
the
Game
World**



COMPUTER GAMING

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SOFTWARE SHOWCASE

ORC ATTACK

Thorn EMi/Atari/cartridge

Some highly unusual mechanics spice this contest in which the player must defend the ramparts of a castle against a host of ravening orcs and their various supernatural allies. The besieging force has decided to go all-out in its assault, and the harried defender will have to use the three main weapons — rocks, swords and burning oil — quickly and effectively to keep the subhuman warriors from racing up their scaling ladders to overwhelm the imposing stone fortress that fills the entire play screen.

The well-drawn defender zips back and forth across the top of the screen on the battlements in response to the joystick. He moves at a fairly rapid pace, however, so that it is necessary to press and hold the action button to slow him down enough to make accurate aiming of missiles directed at the orcs possible. Before the player's on-screen character can do anything to deter the advancing army, he must get a weapon by visiting the caches located at the extreme left and right

edges of the display. Once armed with a rock — the usual weapon — he can drop it on the ladder-climbing orcs below, slowing their progress up the wall. Since there are many orcs and only one defender, the player must rush hither and yon, making split-second strategic decisions on the fly and not forgetting to watch out for sneaky ninja orcs which don't even need ladders to climb the wall.

If the orcs do get a ladder built that carries one to the battlements, the program automatically gives the defender a sword instead of a rock the next time he rearms. As the orc tries to stab the defender with a dagger, the player's man can swipe at the loathsome creature with the sword. Pulling the handle straight toward the aracker

causes the defender to make an especially strong cut with the blade. Too many of these tiring strokes weaken your man, so they must be used with some restraint.

The burning oil is a clever device used to end each wave of attack. When an oil flash appears, dropping it on the attackers causes them to burn up entirely, clearing the way for another assault at a more challenging level of difficulty. And when even those crossbow-firing savages fail to strike terror in the player's heart, look out for the spell-casting wizard, repulsive stone warts, and the demon trolls which appear in a tower of flame.

Orc Attack's greatest strengths are its clever graphics, distinctive play-action and entertaining premise. It can also be a tiring game, one that most home arcaders will not want to test their mettle against too many times in a row. It's great fun to play as a change-of-pace from other, more standard action games, though, and strongly recommended to Atari computer-owners for that reason.

(Steve Davidson)

TROMPERS

Avant-Garde Creations/Apple II/48K disk

Pity poor Arnold Strump. Life is, at best, a dog-eat-dog affair for the man from the animal pound, and now he's got a knee-shaking problem in *Trompers*. Mr. Strump's shortwave radio hobby has gotten out of hand; his gear is sending out an intergalactic welcome that has residents of the planet Tromp streaming toward our little world.

The computerist uses the joystick to move Arnold Strump (rendered in clean linework) back and forth across the bottom of the screen. One-creature flying saucers enter the display near the upper left corner and skim across the screen to leave by the opposite edge. At some point, the cute little tromper inside will abandon ship and



I WAS A TEENAGE ZOMBIE!



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"IT GOT SO I COULDN'T LET GO," confesses John Carlson of Hickory Falls, Iowa. "My hands were welded to my joystick 24 hours a day. Blisters covered both my thumbs, my wrists ached, my eyes throbbed . . ." It had started as mindless play for young Johnny. But now it was turning his mind to green jelly.

Finally, concerned relatives decided to seek help. Johnny remembers: "I'd passed out after 63 million points—I forgot which game. When I came to, I saw a personal computer in my room, with an Infocom game in the disk drive. I just sat there, numb, staring at the words on the screen."

Then—the revelation. "There was like this voice inside the computer, talking to my imagination. Suddenly, I was inside the story. I'd never experienced anything like it—challenging puzzles, realistic people, true dangers. Infocom had plugged into my mind, and shot me into a whole new dimension."

"Sure, I still play video games. But now I know there's more to life than joysticks."

Johnny's folks agree. "We've got our boy back," says Mrs. Carlson, "thanks to Infocom."

We can't save all the Johnnies. But many can still be reached through the remarkable prose of such Infocom games as ZORK® DEADLINE™, The WITNESS™, INFIDEL™, PLANET-FALL™ and ENCHANTER™. So please—before it's too late—step up to Infocom. All words. No pictures. The secret regions of your mind are beckoning. A new dimension is in there waiting for you.

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try to land on the surface. Arnold must catch these space visitors with his net, either on the fly or after one or more bounces.

The trompers arrive in waves of increasing size, first three, then five, seven and nine. Wiping out an entire wave earns the player an extra life up to a maximum of nine. Getting through a complete round — that would mean catching a total of 24 creatures — starts a fresh series.

This isn't a very challenging game,



even when person-holes are added (on level #3). It's hard to see how *Trompers* could hold many terrors for electronic gamers weaned on the likes of *Repton* and *Shamus*. On the other hand, its undeniable charm and straightforward simplicity make *Trompers* one of the best kideo disks on the market. It's too bad that Avant-Garde's packaging, further undercut by skimpy documentation, doesn't call this aspect of the game to the attention of prospective buyers. While adults are apt to find *Trompers* slightly tricky rather than genuinely mind-stretching, it appears to be a psychologically sound choice as a vehicle for introducing youngsters to the pleasure of home arcading.

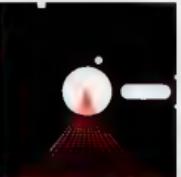
Pre-teens will like the theme with its humorous overtones, and their folks will probably appreciate the de-emphasis on violence and shooting. Give the publisher a gold star for addressing the needs of the youngest gamers, with a couple of demerits for not making sure the gaming public would get the message.

(Arnie Katz)

ARCHON

Electronic Arts/Atari/48K disk

The forces of Light and Darkness square off in mortal combat in a quest



COMPUTER GAMING

to control an ever-changing playfield in this fascinating contest that borrows elements from sorcery, mythology, and chess.

The ultimate object of *Archon* is to place a game icon (a character representing either the Dark or Light side) on each of the five power points symmetrically placed on a checkerboard-like playfield. The army of Light, under the guidance of the wizened old Wizard, consists of knights, amazon archers, unicorns, valkyries, golems, a phoenix, and a djinni. The Sorceress commands the Dark Forces, an intimidating crew made up of goblins, banshees, trolls, manticores, basilisks, a shapeshifter, and a dragon. Each side is slightly different, but with equal might.

The innate skills of the individual "soldier" influences the way each icon moves across the black, white, or gray squares (banshees can fly over occupied squares, while goblins are more earth-bound). The particular character's abilities influence how far it can move, which direction it moves in, and the sort of attack mode it uses when challenged for the rights to a square.

Unlike chess, having the "dominant" piece does not automatically guarantee possession of a square. The idea behind *Archon* is that even the lowliest of character types can win a battle, given a little luck and a lot of skill. In this game, whenever one character challenges another for squatting rights to a square, the territory in dispute enlarges to encompass the entire playing screen, and the two "game pieces" pit their unique abilities against each other in a fight to the finish. The survivor keeps possession of the square — for the time being, anyway.

An example of the types of attack modes the characters use is the evil, wailing Banshee. To damage an opponent, the spirit must get close enough to catch her enemy in a piercing cloud of sound. The virtuous

Knights depend on their trusty swords, while the unicorns hurl small missile weapons.

An important factor influences the actions of Light and Dark alike — the ever-shifting color of the squares beneath the armies' feet. While some of the black or white squares remain fixed in their original shades, many key squares cycle through hues of black, white and gray in a predictable, fixed pattern. The color of the square an icon stands on influences the outcome of any combat it engages in.

If a character stands on a square of its own color (Dark on dark or Light on light), the icon draws extra strength from the territory and has a longer lifeline in battle situations (the lifelines of respective combatants are shown at the sides of the screen during the battle sequence; the longer the lifeline, the more injury a character can sustain without dying). Characters forced to do battle for a square of the opposite hue have a distinct disadvantage. Gray squares offer varying degrees of protection. The color-shifting squares cycle slightly with each turn, a strategic challenge considering that



ARCHON (ELECTRONIC ARTS)

three of the five power points are located on unstable territory.

The Wizard and the Sorceress begin each game standing on power points that match their own color (well, almost... the forces of Light are actually yellow, while the Dark side is blue). Each mage has the ability to cast up to seven different spells, each affecting the game in a different way. For example, magic can be used to "heal" a wounded icon, "revive" a dead one, or "teleport" a character to a different square. Each spell can be used only once per game.

In its two-player variation, *Archon* is one of the most satisfying, innovative, mentally stimulating games available for the Atari computer. Its one-player option, which pits the gamer against a computer opponent, is a bit too hard

for the average player, though. In this option, the only way to win is to convince the computer that you're an idiot by making stupid moves at the start of the game. Then, when it lets down its defenses, go in for the kill. To beat the computer, players have to learn to shoot diagonally.

Archon is a beautifully crafted game that pleases both the mind and the body. To win, both its strategy and its action elements must be mastered. The graphics and animation are good, as are the sound effects that accompany each character's movement. And, as with all of Electronic Arts' releases, it's attractively packaged in a record album-box, with detailed, well-written instructions. Chalk up another winner for Electronic Arts — and Freefall Associates.

(Tracie Forman)

CLIPPER: AROUND THE HORN IN 1850

PDI/Atari/32K disk

Every so often a software manufacturer releases a new title that makes a wave in the endless stream of look-alike shoot-'em-ups and cute mazechases. Program Design, Inc., the company that produced the Arcade Award winner *Moonbase Io*, has done just that with *Clipper: Around the Horn in 1850*, its new offering for the Atari computers. What makes *Clipper* so noteworthy is its overall concept and design — a narrated game simulation with three screens that is not only entertaining, but also an education in sailing and its history.

At the outset of the program, the gamer chooses one of 10 available 19th Century clipper ships to captain and sail from New York to San Francisco via Cape Horn. Because each vessel has its own characteristics, the gamer must outfit each voyage differently. Even in the same ship, a different manifest may be required because of fluctuations in the cost of provisions and the amount of money on hand in the treasury.

The gamer outfits his clipper by entering the number of crew members he or she wishes to hire and the amount of cargo and provisions the ship intends to take on. All the information is entered using the joystick and the fire button. (That's "user-friendly".) Once the gamer has outfitted the vessel, the race around the tip of South America begins.

Don't get the idea, though, that it's clear sailing.

Sail Around Cape Horn, but Watch out for The Reefs, the Icebergs, and The Crew!

Two screens display the ship's logbook and a map of the western hemisphere. However, most of the time the player will use the main screen, which shows the bridge of the clipper and provides four important readings. Proper usage of these readings is absolutely essential if the gamer doesn't wish to run aground or get lost at sea. (If either happens, a news clipping relates the sighting of the shipwreck and the loss of all hands.) The readings, from left to right, are: the percentage of unfurled sail, the clipper's position in longitude and latitude, the vessel's heading and speed, and the wind's direction and speed.



Fortunately for us landlubbers, the game designer, John Bayes, provides a build-it-yourself compass with the program.

Perhaps not so fortunately, he has also filled the oceans with uncharted reefs and maverick icebergs — oh, the sound of splintering wood! In addition to those dangers, the crew may become ill or decide to mutiny. If they do mutiny, the captain has the option of putting some or all of them in chains. There are also other dangers calculated to convince gamers that sailing the Seven Seas is a little tougher than floating a rubber ducky in the bathtub.

As if the program itself weren't enough to satisfy most gamers, PDI added an optional voice cassette to the simulation. If the gamer elects to use it, it entertains with traditional sea

chants, gives advice from an ex-captain, and threatens with a crusty pirate.

All in all, *Clipper* is an entertaining simulation. But don't allow the lapping waves to dull your judgement because that sound and the sound of seagulls usually means there's a reef right ahead. Hard to port! Lower that sail!

(Vincent Puglia)

TUBEWAY

Datamost/Apple II/48K disk

It isn't always easy to fathom the actions of the governments of Earth's nation states, so it isn't altogether surprising that aliens from another universe go about things in a somewhat different fashion than we do. As the pilot of a space scout, you encounter hard evidence of the truth of this observation in the form of the Tubeway, a vast construction hanging in the void. Some force locks your craft to the rim of the vast geometric form as an invasion fleet swarms out of the hyperspace warp located at its center.

Although this perimeter shooting game is playable with keyboard controls, it reaches its true potential when the gamer employs a paddle. Use the knob to make your shooter skim along the edge of each of 32 progressively more difficult geometric playfields. You can shoot at the four different types of aliens by hitting the paddle's action button. Needless to say, they're firing back, too. There is also a fierce creature known only as the Destroyer which inhabits the square cage found in the lower left-hand corner of the display. When the shortening vertical line on the right side of the screen disappears, the Destroyer breaks out of its cage and sails over to the Tubeway. The player's shooter is completely vulnerable to the Destroyer and must avoid all physical contact with the ameboid attacker.

The only defense against the Destroyer — and the only way of eliminating attacking aliens who manage to gain a perch on the tubeway's rim — is to take advantage of the Super Zapper. When the timing line indicates that it is active, the Super Zapper starts to travel around the tubeway, one small segment at a time. If the player fires the shooter when it is on top of the lit segment, everything on the rim, including the Destroyer, goes poof! In fact, one type of attacker, dubbed the "Five", is worth 500 points when kayo'd by the Super Zap-

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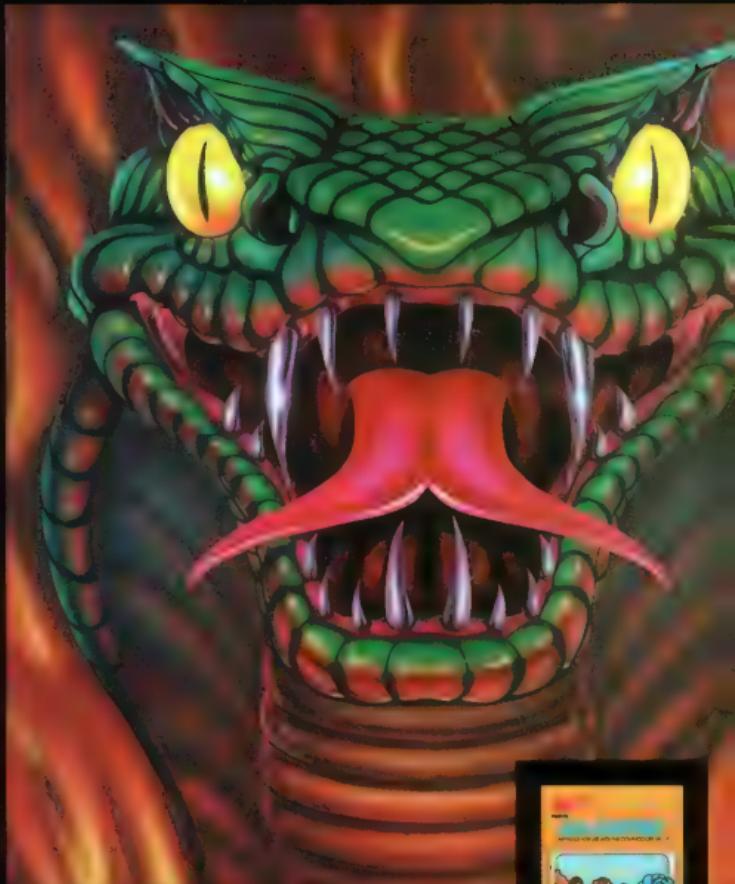
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S O F T W A R E

per, but only five points if eliminated by a blast from the shooter.

When you totally eliminate all the aliens on one screen, a new geometric figure takes its place. The gamer starts with a supply of three shooters and receives a reinforcement every time he tallies 20,000 points. Attaining this plateau also sets off some visual pyrotechnics on the screen. David Arthur Van Brink, creator of this magnificant target contest, went a bit overboard here, possibly in reaction to the scant notice most other games take of such mighty achievements. The graphic fireworks play such tricks with the screen that it is very, very hard to concentrate on the business at hand—blasting aliens. More than one home aracer will immediately lose that hard-won extra ship.

Completing a playfield without loss of a shooter earns a bonus. It's worth 500 on the first level, 1,000 points on



TUBEWAY (DATAMOST)

the second, and then rises by increments of 500 points until it tops out at 2,000.

The similarities between *Tubeway* and Atari's coin-op *Tempest* are obvious and undeniable. Yet *Tubeway* is not a mere clone of the quarter-snatcher. For instance, the attackers do not just advance toward the nm up the narrow channels; they actually rotate from pathway to pathway during flight, keeping the situation from getting too predictable. The presence of the Destroyer and Super Zapper also add an extra dimension to play, and put a great premium on finishing off each playfield as rapidly as possible. Think of *Tubeway* as being in the same gaming genre as *Tempest* rather than an outright copy and you'll have the general idea.

The graphics are surprisingly good, especially in light of the limitations of



COMPUTER GAMING

raster scan television technology (Remember, Atari used a vector graphics monitor with *Tempest*). Each field flashes a rainbow of colors when it first appears, but it then reverts to a purplish monochrome. Well, at least the one-color design is a tad easier on the eyes during the heat of play, which can get mighty frenetic once you've conquered the first few, relatively easy, levels of play.

Tubeway is a fine game that presents a play mechanic that has not been used much in the videogame and computer game arenas as of yet. It is therefore bound to be of particularly great interest to fans of action arcade programs who want to test their abilities in an unusual setting. Highly recommended.

(Arnie Katz)

SAMMY LIGHTFOOT

Sierra On-Line/Apple II/48K disk

Before jaded members of the joystick jury start groaning about "another (expletive deleted) climbing game", it must be said that *Sammy Lightfoot* is both beautifully programmed (by Warren Schwader) and surprisingly different from the other climbing and jumping extravaganzas that have caught game-dom's fancy over the last 18 months.

Sammy Lightfoot is a circus acrobat whom the player must guide through a three-screen obstacle course using

the joystick. There are 12 skill levels for each scenario. If Sammy survives the gauntlet with a whole skin, the program automatically jumps to the next hardest setting. Displaying a touch of subtlety that's missing from too many disks these days, Schwader increases the challenge at each level without falling back on the simple expedient of just upping the speed of events. In *Sammy Lightfoot*, most of the added difficulty comes from additional nuisance obstacles and added complications in some of the tasks the acrobat must perform in order to pass his audition.

Holding down the action button lets Sammy bounce higher and higher on the trampolines in the first scenario. Similarly, holding down the button makes him grab one of the trapezes which are so useful for getting over chasms between the platforms that are too wide for Sammy to jump



SAMMY LIGHTFOOT (2ND SCREEN)

Swinging up to the platform where a pumpkin in sunglasses sits waiting ends the first scenario and sends Sammy on to the next. This time, he must run under a row of plungers while making sure to avoid falling by stepping on one of the disappearing platforms found below when it briefly winks out of existence. After crossing back by leaping from the top of one plunger to the next, Sammy steps onto a magic carpet for yet another cross-screen trip. Staying on the carpet is easy at skill level one, but its flightpath takes some strange dips and turns when the going gets tougher.

Scenario three suffers slightly from its similarity to the second stanza. This time, the on-screen character must avoid hammers and puff balls, ride the elevator up the left side of the display and then use the trapeze to cross a flaming pit to land on a platform tenanted by another pumpkin in shades.

The graphics, done with the aid of Courtney Smith, are irresistibly charming. The playfields have very little



SAMMY LIGHTFOOT (3RD SCREEN)

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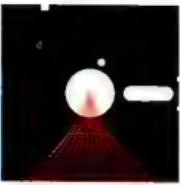
background detail, but the significant objects are all well-drawn in a thin-line, cartoony style, that goes well with the circus atmosphere. Still, a few more trimmings might've helped reinforce the "Big Top" atmosphere.

The instructions are a definite weak point, and that's a bit unusual for an On-Line disk. Oh, you can get a fair idea of the mechanics of play, but the rules don't really set much of a goal for the player. (It turns out that there's no grand design for Sammy beyond just getting through the audition in one piece.) For instance, the countdown bonus clock is mentioned, but the author of the rules folder doesn't really explain how difficulty adjustments affect the timing. This bit of knowledge is not, admittedly, vital, but it's something most players like to know.



This vagueness is particularly lamentable because *Sammy Lightfoot* sports a large roster of pre-game options. At the push of the "return" key, you can choose the number of players (one or two), set the type of control (keyboard or stick) for each individually, turn the sound effects and opening tunes off and on, pick skill levels (one-six are selectable) for each participant and reset high scores. Once adjusted, these options can be saved for future reuse by pressing the "return" key at the appropriate time.

Of course, we play the game, not the rulebook. And *Sammy Lightfoot* is a pleasant, if somewhat lightweight,



COMPUTER GAMING

game. A fully professional job of code-juggling by Warren Schwader has produced a cute change-of-pace contest.

(Arnie Katz)

CANNONBALL BLITZ

Sierra On-Line/VIC-20/cartridge

This three-screen climbing game has the Revolutionary War as its motif. But, the theme has very little to do with the graphics and nothing at all to do with the play-mechanic. *Cannonball Blitz* — with some major improvements — could have just as easily been called *Donkey Kong* or *Jumpman*.

In the first screen, the gamer's character must climb a hill (which more than anything resembles a zigzag girder construct) in order to capture the enemy's flag. Along his path are trap doors, "catapults" (seesaws or teeter-totters to the rest of the world) and rolling cannonballs. There is also a balloon to help the player skip a level.

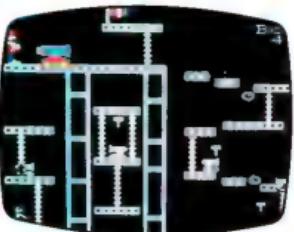
The object of the second screen is to bring the structure down on the Redcoat by walking over the trap doors. When all of the doors have been turned into holes, the girder structure collapses. Adding some excitement

are randomly firing cannons which travel up and down the various levels but do not jump across a hole created by the character.

The third screen includes up and down elevators, unconnected girders and the usual complement of cannons and cannonballs.

In the last two screens, hammers are provided so that the gamer can bop a cannon to pieces.

There are a few nice touches in the programming: the "Johnny Comes Marching Home" theme song, the function button that shuts it off, the joystick-controlled screen level option, the pause option, and the cute



CANNONBALL BLITZ (SIERRA ON-LINE)

(but extremely bare) graphics. (The only color on-screen is used for the enemy and his flag. Everything else is white!) However, it seems to this reviewer that Sierra On-Line could have better spent its time developing a game closer to the state of the art, or (even better) a game that would have added something new to computer gaming.

Until someone produces a *Donkey Kong* or a *Jumpman* for the VIC, *Cannonball Blitz* is the way to go.

(Vincent Puglia)

ARTICLES OF WAR

By NEIL SHAPIRO

DELTA SQUADRON

Nexa/Apple II/64K disk

Picture a huge, terrifying space station about the size of a small moon. The outside of the station is studded with laser turrets and guarded by swarms of small — but deadly — fighters.

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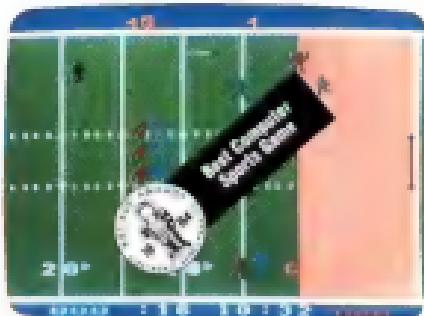
alone, this evil empire will extend its control throughout the galaxy. An alliance of rebellious worlds is making one final effort to destroy the station by taking advantage of its one weakness.

These rebel ships must fly down a narrow trench-shaped depression in the station's exterior in order to drop their photon bombs directly atop one small, almost untargetable main pow-

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er induction inverter. Opposing the rebel forces are the best of the evil empire's fighter craft. Will the rebels destroy the moon-sized station before it becomes operational? Or, will they fail, turning their own planet into stellar debris, making the alliance crumble?

Well, if you have lived anywhere on the planet Earth, you may detect a bit of similarity between the just-outlined scenario — the main scenario of the computer game of Delta Squadron — and the plot of "Star Wars". Yet of all the games that try to capture the flavor of that last desperate struggle, whether they're on computers, in the arcades, in cardboard boxes, and probably on other planets, it is Delta Squadron which best succeeds both as a simulation and as a game.

As the player, you control the strategy and tactics of up to 34 small one- and two-man fighters belonging to the (ahem) Legion Alliance. The computer directs the forces of the Cetusile Empire, also composed of small fighters as well as the gun emplacements surrounding the trench.

Beautiful high-resolution and well-animated displays make planning and controlling these movements a futuristic experience, and represent a truly unique play-mechanic.

The first screen offers the choice of nine different scenarios of varying degrees of difficulty and complexity. While the goal — bombing the power inverter port — is the same in all variation, the mix of ships and their starting positions demand that the commander develop various strategies in order to win. The wide choice of scenarios has always guaranteed a fresh gaming experience.

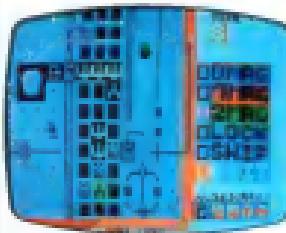
Once the scenario is selected, after the gamer consults the included fold-out instructions, the mapping screen appears. The mapping screen allows you to choose among three map scales, as well as to lock onto indi-

COMPUTER GAMING

vidual ships or to move into the ship information screens.

The 0 Magnification Level shows the complete trench. The scale represents enemy and friendly forces only as white dots. The player can zoom in on any area of this large-scale map.

To get a close-up, first pick the area of the map to enlarge with the joystick



Note the color coding at magnification zero.

or paddles by moving two on-screen brackets. These are located on the bottom of the screen and on the right, thus framing the area of the screen to be magnified closer.

Once the area is framed, the commander can choose the number 1 Magnification. This moves from the 0 level (37 columns and 68 rows of map-squared) to 24 columns by 22 rows. At this point, the individual ships become full silhouettes so that the player can determine their types.

Framing the area even more tightly allows for use of the number 2 Magnification Level. At this high magnification, the area of map displayed is 12 columns by 11 rows, and the ships appear much larger and are color-coded. Legion ships that are on-course within the trench are shown as white; off-course ships as green, and the slime-eating Cetusile ships are purple.

Once the competitors get a general idea about the layout of each side's forces, the Legion player plans his ships' movements and fires using the computer and other displays. From the map mode, the commander can

go directly to ship mode and select any individual ship by entering its number. It's also possible, from map mode, to lock onto any individual ship by moving arrows to point at its position with the paddles or joystick and then move or fire.

The Command Select Screen allows a player to obtain data on each ship, concerning its firing or movement — choices are entered by moving paddles or joystick rather than with the keyboard. This screen also shows fine animated views of each of the three classes of Legion fighters. While the rotating wire images do not in themselves relate directly to the play-mechanics of the game, they do add a certain flavor of computer-governed, far-future operations that this reviewer found both eye-catching and exciting.

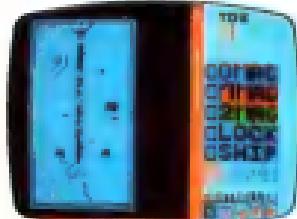
From the data choice, the gamer can list all ships in the fleet at once or just select one ship's characteristics. Information here details each ship's direction, the pilot's overall rating, whether it is on-course (flying within the trench), if it has moved or fired, and its column/row location.

The movement choice allows the player scope to move each ship individually. If the player does not move a ship, the computer continues its movement at the end of the movement phase. The computer will also fire any ship's guns should an enemy come within range. So even though the movement and firing rules are complex, the game still plays in a quick and easy manner. Only the tactically important ships, those that are maneuvering differently than in the preceding turn, must be given specific orders.

There are three classes of Legion fighters; Alpha Attack Fighters, Beta Attack Fighters and Gamma Defense Fighters. All move and fire within different ranges. The Alpha class includes very fast pursuit ships equipped



The Command Select Screen provides data.



Delta Squadron has three map screens.



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with photon torpedoes. The Beta class is composed of assault ships that are less maneuverable but have a greater field of fire with their twin lasers. They also carry a payload of photon torpedoes. Gamma fighters are very fast and very maneuverable but they don't have photon torps, and thus cannot blow up on their own.

Depending on the square in which it ended the last turn, a fighter can maneuver to point in a different direction for the next turn's movement. The directions to which it can turn are shown in the foldout instructions on a square by square basis. During play, however, the computer plots the squares that each ship has available for



Individual ships can be scrutinized.

movement as each enters the movement display. Since the computer only accepts legal maneuvers, knowing each of your ship's movement capabilities should quickly become second nature.

Each style of ship has a specific firing pattern. Alpha attack fighters, for example, cannot shoot to the rear, while both Beta and Gamma vessels may fire in any direction. When a ship is called up by the firing command, the video



COMPUTER GAMING

screen displays the ship's silhouette and outlines it within its firing pattern. A quick visual check shows which enemies are legitimate targets.

The Legion's ships must move within the strict guidelines as detailed above, but the Cetusites enemies — the Tactical Fighters and Tactical Command Fighters — are somewhat more maneuverable. They can all travel in any direction, giving them greater mobility than the player's ships. So, even in scenarios in which the Cetusites are outnumbered, play unfolds in a thought-provoking and challenging manner.

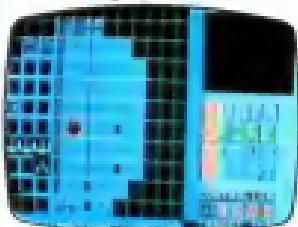
Once all movement and firing are ordered, the computer takes charge.

First, it moves any ship for which orders have been cut. Then it auto-moves ships without new orders along their existing routes. Then the Cetusites move under computer control. Combats are quickly calculated on-screen as the ships fire and — if destroyed — vanish.

At the end of this phase, an out-the-window-view displays any enemies approaching ships so that the computer can autofire, and the results of those combats are shown.

At this point, the only unacceptable feature of the program becomes evident. Many of the computer messages concerning ship numbers and combat results appear and disappear so quickly that they are hard to read. Hopefully, revisions of Delta Squadron will correct this. Luckily, the results are so evident that the messages are not completely needed.

Because the scenarios are so varied, it's hard to provide many tactical hints. The varied capabilities of the ships are important to keep in mind. While the Gamma fighters are not numerous, they can be used to best advantage to protect the sides and rear of the trench-running Alphas and Betas. The



Area screens aid the computerist.

Beta fighters can fire to the rear and so, while scooting up the trench, can protect against any pursuers. The Alpha fighters are, of course, the main "run-like-the-dicks" vessels upon which the success of most missions will depend.

Delta Squadron is that hard-to-find blend of science fiction and strategy that should appeal to fans of both.

Down the trench, boys — the Force is with us!

PASSPORT TO ADVENTURE

By TRACIE FORMAN

WITNESS

Intervision/Apple II & Atari/48K, disk

You've been summoned to the posh home of the Linder family to investigate a death threat against its wealthy patriarch, a shrewd businessman whose keen mind helped amass a small fortune. Yet all the money and influence in the world couldn't help him avert his wife's suicide, a tragedy still profoundly affecting both Linder and his daughter Monica.

So begins *Witness*, the second inst-

adventure murder mystery from Infocom. Like its predecessor *Deadline*, the game comes packaged in a realistic detective's dossier crammed with vital physical evidence. Among the clues: the telegram received from Mr. Linder; an actual newspaper page from the era, redone slightly to include pertinent information among the real news stories; Mrs. Linder's suicide note; and a matchbook. (Smokers are warned to keep the latter safely tucked into the dossier while not actually

playing. This reviewer accidentally used up the matches, then threw away the matchbook — along with a few important clues!)

If there's ever an award given for best computer game documentation, *Witness'* notebook would definitely take the prize. Instead of the usual typewritten sheet, the instructions are contained in the pages of an old-fashioned detective magazine, complete with splashy front cover and back-page ads for cheap detective

kits. Besides a well-written, easy-to-understand rulebook, players will find a helpful extra in the page listing the entire summary of possible commands.

As with all of Infocom's adventures, *Witness* has a wider and more complex vocabulary than is usually found in this genre. Instead of typing in an adventure jargon command like "Look book", gamers might want to try "Look at the book, then sit in the green chair."

As in *Deadline*, there are no graphics displays or sound effects in the game. *Witness* doesn't need them. Its descriptive prose is as vivid as a novel's, painting verbal pictures of

A Murderer Stalks the Streets and Only You Can Stop Him!

acts as the player's right-hand man, appearing from out of nowhere to run clues and fingerprints down to the station for analysis.

Before the night is out, a murder will be committed. The killer will go free,



Witness, Infocom's second murder mystery, takes sleuthing one step further along the trail. As with *Deadline*, it comes beautifully packaged with clues, dossiers, and other relevant and mood-enhancing materials for the detective.

the suspects (and victim) more strikingly than any mere picture could.

Armchair detectives will meet Linder himself — as much a failure as a husband and father as he is a success at business; his daughter Monica, who can neither forget nor forgive her mother's fate; the late Mrs. Linder's grieving lover, driven half-mad with the death of his mate; and a cool, mysterious butler named Phong. Another character, Sergeant Duffy,

unless the evidence is gathered, motives are found, and the guilty party apprehended — all within the space of a 12-hour time limit. (There is no "real time" limit in this game; each time the player makes a move by typing in a command, several minutes pass.)

Ace detectives, super-sleuths, and even amateur gumshoes will delight in this multi-faceted, involving game. If you like mysteries, you'll love *Witness*. Case closed.

AN EXCERPT FROM "WITNESS"

"...Monica stops talking and looks at you sharply. She is a woman in her mid-twenties. Her grey eyes flash, emphasising her dark wavy hair and light, but effective, make-up. She wears a navy nylon blouse, tan slacks, and tan pumps with Cuban heels. She acts as though you were a mother who just gave her a whinge.

Linder stands at least six foot, with a powerful frame but quick actions. He's a cat. His eyeglasses sit on top of his head, where thin strands of long black hair gather and there, mostly combed backward. His wide-set dark eyes slice you up quickly from within their pouches in his mucky face. He wears a silk peach-colored mandarin shirt and chocolate trousers, impeccably tailored and laundered, but sweat gleams on his high forehead, and he looks as though he hasn't slept much lately.

Linder turns to you and says, "Detective, am I glad to see you!"

THINK TANK

By TRACIE FORMAN

EXCALIBUR

Atari Program Exchange/Atari 48K disk

"It's good to be King" — at least, according to Mel Brooks in "History of the World, Part I". But in the good old days of swords and chivalry, sovereignty meant more than just banquets, royal weddings, and pressing the flesh with the simple folk.

King Arthur's job was among the hardest of them all: to unite and bring peace to the warring factions of Britain; uphold and defend the high ideals on which Camelot was founded; conduct high-level diplomacy with faithful knights and archenemies alike; and prove to a dubious public that he truly was the rightful King of all Britain. Not work for the faint of heart. Although *Excalibur* isn't a game for the weak, since it requires a fair amount of patience, Machiavellian diplomacy, and a good military mind.

The rulebook alone should serve to warm off those gamers less comfortable with strategy games. Even though the actual play-mechanic is explained quite simply in several

pages, all the clues for winning the game are contained in an enclosed novella. Here, would-be Once and Future Kings have the chance to hear Merlin's sage advice on subjects ranging from the tax base to honoring faithful knights. Simply put, players who hope to make good their claim of kingship will find the book essential reading.

After a laudable opening sequence — wherein the Lady of the Lake's hand comes out of the water, brandishing the sword Excalibur — the gamer is taken to the throne room at Camelot. Six knights already sit at the Round Table, and more follow during the course of the game. Each knight is identified by a unique shield, while Queen Guinevere is depicted as the crown. The closer each knight (or queen) is to the circular table, the more loyal he supposedly is to Arthur.

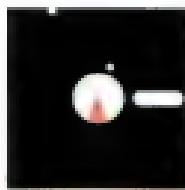
While in the throne room, Arthur has the option of giving a gift or honor to an individual, selecting knights to



accompany him on campaign, or banishing those he feels are on the verge of treason. (Needless to say, this should only be used in dire circumstances.) Arthur's popularity with his own people depends upon many factors, including how his army has been faring, how sensitive he is to each knight's personality (some like being honored, while others prefer cold cash), and who says what to whom.

By moving the crown (symbolizing Arthur) up the hall, the King enters his treasury. Here is displayed the wealth of the Kingdom. Arthur can raise or lower taxes, hire armies, check on his prestige factor (if it's too low, he's likely to be attacked). The higher his prestige, the more likely that other lords will offer tithes for protection, and hear whatever news there is. A strategic map of the country also indicates Arthur's friends (pink), enemies (blue), and neutral territories (green).

The third room is Merlin's laboratory. Here, the young King can ask the



COMPUTER GAMING

mighty sorcerer to send a plague or pestilence against a strong enemy, change the opinion of another king, or see into a rival's personal affairs. The latter includes a survey of the other King's cash, armies, prestige, knight



The Atari Program Exchange's *Excalibur* has some beautiful opening sequence graphics as well as the more traditional wargaming graphic symbols.

followers, and opinions about other lords. Merlin's powers are not unlimited, though. He often has to rest after casting a series of spells, and he won't reappear until his powers have been restored.

When a rival king leads an army against Camelot, Arthur's crown flashes a warning. When the army arrives, a formal challenge will be issued, and the king can either fight or wait. The invaders will pillage the town if left alone.

If Arthur fights, he and his knights

are transported to the battlefield. Peasants always kill a number of invaders before the battle proper. Before the action begins, gamers set the positions their knights will move to, and can spy on the strength of individual opponents. Then, a push of the "Start" button starts the armies toward each other. When they meet, they come out bashing. Although Arthur can adjust each knight's position during battle, if the tide turns against Camelot, knights might turn and flee. When panicked, a knight's shield turns a checkerboard pattern, and he won't respond to any directions. If too many knights turn tail, Arthur can retreat.

A lost battle demoralizes the knights, while a victory wins prestige. Prestige brings tithes from petty kings in exchange for protection, but first Arthur must visit the castle in question to set his fees. The son of Pendragon doesn't have to wait for enemies to attack; he might want to lead his



armies against a long-on-enemy territory.

All in all, *Excalibur* is a grand effort. Its wargame-style graphics (mostly symbols, with some words) are colorful and easily understood, while the game itself is playable again and again. Gamers will definitely find truth in the words, "Heavy lies the head that wears the crown."

ELECTRONIC PRESSBOX

By STEVE DAVIDSON

I could rattle off the most obscure sports stats at the drop of a helmet, but my uncoordinated body was never quite up to creating memorable statistics of my own on the ball field. Maybe that's why I — and thousands of electronic gamers like me — enjoy

computer sports simulations so much. They let us experience things vicariously.

Beginning this issue, "The Electronic Pressbox" will present detailed analysis of sports software designed for use with the most popular micro-

computers. It's fitting, I think, to kick off the first-in-a-series by examining a pigiee program which has become something of a cult classic over the last couple of years.

TUESDAY MORNING QUARTERBACK

Epyx/Apple (0/488) disk

Charles Anderson's Tuesday Morning Quarterback is getting long in the tooth these days, but it's still packed with possibilities for computerists who want a statistical replay football game (as opposed to the more common action contests in which wielding the joystick is the primary required skill). The graphics are certainly well below current expectations, but the rest of the design plays so smoothly and enjoyably that TMQ can perhaps be partially forgiven for dud visuals.

The current edition has computer simulations of all NFL teams and a pair of all-star squads with performance keyed to statistics of the 1982 season (the one in which the San Francisco 49ers won the Super Bowl). Unfortunately, the otherwise-outstanding instruction booklet has team descriptions that were appropriate for the original disk, which was based on the 1980 season. Give credit to Epyx for at least flagging this with an insert card, but the company also earns a rap on the knuckles for not revising this section of the booklet.

Tuesday Morning Quarterback, playable by two human coaches or one person against the computer, is essentially a matching of offense against defense. On each play, the coaches select the desired formations from a multiple-choice list of options. The computer then matches these choices against each other and, in light of the personnel involved on both sides, determines the outcome. The computer slowly prints out the play as it develops, adding some excitement to what would otherwise be somewhat detached and abstract.

A simply executed football field in the upper left-hand corner of the display indicates the current field position and, utilizing the traditional "x"es and "o"s of the coach's blackboard, displays the formations of both teams just prior to the snap from scrimmage. The scoreboard, located to the right of the field, indicates such important information as the score, the down and the field position.

An unusual note in a stat game is that TMQ requires coaches to show

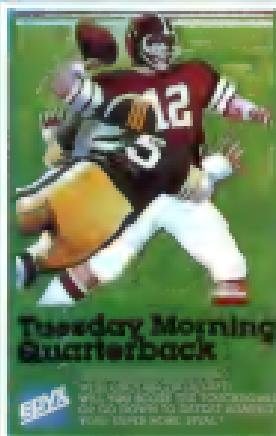
Montana Is Scrambling For His Life! Does He Fire The Bomb?

some manual dexterity in the kicking game. Punts and field goals aren't a cinch, and the wise computerist will use the "kicking practice" option the designer has thoughtfully provided.

Penalties and injuries play significant roles in the game. Anderson has exercised some subtlety in this phase, so most of the injuries are sprains and bruises that only put the stricken player out for a couple of series. More disabling injuries are also possible, of course.

"Momentum", that old intangible, is quite palpable in TMQ. A team that is making first downs, completing passes and such will tend to keep on doing so, while the other side will find it harder to execute its plans successfully. Fortunately, the effect of momentum does lessen appreciably during the waning moments of each half, so comebacks are possible.

Tuesday Morning Quarterback is not the last word in stat football contests, but it has a certain charm that many psokin fanatics will find hard to resist. ☺



TUESDAY MORNING QUARTERBACK (Epyx)

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It was as peaceful a day as New York
ever gets, when suddenly the sky
went dark and a mysterious shrieking

noise filled the air. Hordes of
protopunk aliens were swooping
down from all sides, biting into the

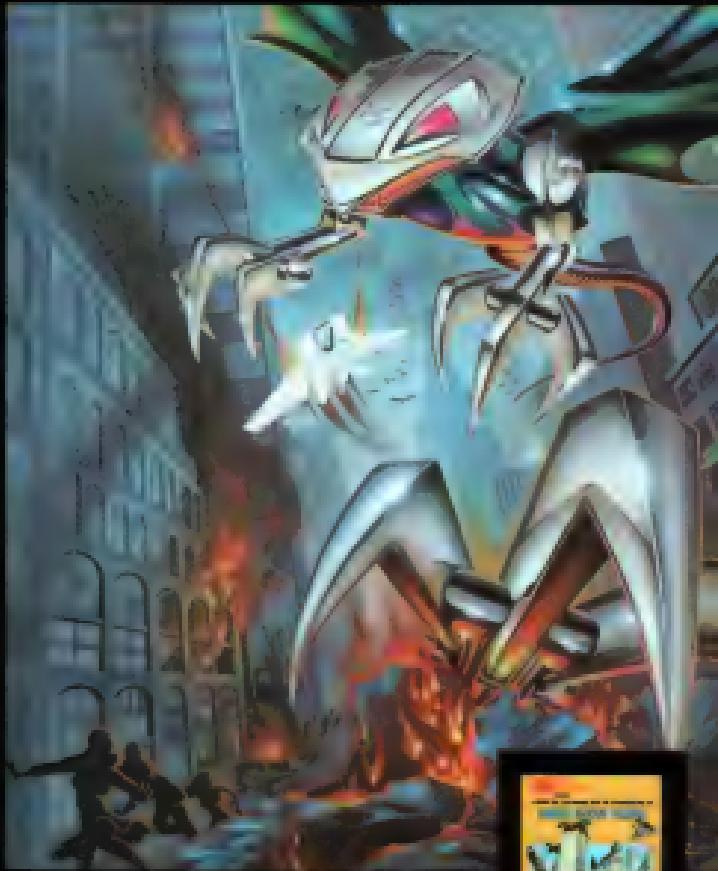
Big Apple as if they hadn't eaten
for days. They were laying eggs, too.
Horrible shiny things that got down

into the subway tunnels and began

clawing their way up. If anyone
was going to save the city it would

have to be me. I leapt into my
rocket and began blasting away.

I thought I stood a fighting chance,
but hell's running low... another
wave of invaders on the horizon
...signing off...



S O F T W A R E

1984 Arcade Awards

Here Are the Year's Greatest Games!

By THE EDITORS OF ELECTRONIC GAMES

When Rees Communications began sponsoring the Arcade Awards (Arcade) five years ago, the company hoped to single out outstanding achievements in the field of electronic gaming and, in doing so, promote the kind of growth and improvement that seemed possible for the new hobby. Thanks primarily to the efforts of the nation's game designers — and, of course, the software houses which distribute their work to the rest of us — that dream of greater games to come has become a reality.

It may sound like a cliché, but this was definitely the most hotly contested Arcade Awards competition yet. Even after tabulating thousands of votes by the readers and considering the recommendations of the judging Committee, some of the race

were still closer than a blast brigadier's finger is to the action button. Many excellent games failed to win an Arcade Award or *Bethesda Games Certificate of Merit* that would have leap to victory with ease against the 1982 or 1983 slate of eligibles.

ANALYSIS OF VOTING

Miner 2049er emerged as the unequivocal popular choice among *Arcade* voters. Going strictly by the popular vote, it would have won or come very close to topping no fewer than three "Game of the Year" Arcade Awards. A fourth version, Micro Fun's Apple edition, got enough votes to rank with the top computer titles, despite the fact that the rules made it technically

ineligible to even compete for the honor.

The Arcade Award Judging Committee, having heard the voice of the gaming nation, recommended that a new award be created this year and given to *Miner*. It therefore gives us great pleasure to announce the initiation of the 1984 Grand Arcade Award for the Best Electronic Game of the Year.

The rest of the voting brought smiles to the faces of the editors who worked on "Meet the Arcade Award Contenders" in the September issue of *Bethesda Games*. The voters generally selected games which also appeared on our list of "early hits" favorite, bolstered by a few titles which appeared after the article was published but in time to qualify for the *Arcade* competition.

ELECTRONIC GAME OF THE YEAR

MINER 2049er

(Big Five/Atari computers;
Micro Fun/Apple II;
Micro Fun/Colecovision;
Tiger/Atari 2600)

Bill Hayes claims that he learned how to program for the Atari — he previously specialized in programs for the TRS-80 — by doing *Miner 2049er*. There's no question that he learned his lessons well, because his 10-screen climbing contest has quickly become the most widely known, played and adored home electronic game.

As the player guides Bounty Bob in pursuit of the dastardly Yukon Yohan, the marvelous Mountain Must successfully con-



quer "mine stations" with one of the wildest assortments of mind and body challenges ever viewed on a video screen. Perhaps the best part is that, since *Miner* is available in excellent versions for a variety of popular systems, just about everyone can enjoy the fun!

VIDEOGAME DIVISION

VIDEOGAME OF THE YEAR

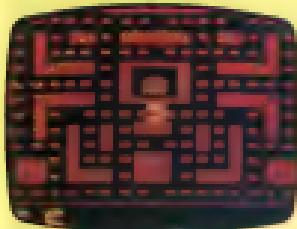
(Less than 16K ROM memory)

MS. PAC-MAN

(Atari/Atari 2600)

"I'm more than Pac-Man with a bow," a cartoon version of Ms. P told viewers when Atari advertised its 2600 edition of the popular Italy coin-op. That claim was certainly no exaggeration, as fans learned when they slammed this game cartridge in the 2600's slot. This one utterly wiped out any lingering bad feelings about the ill-

Gold Awards



©Atari 1982

starred Pac-Man 2600 cart and paved the way for Atari's breathtaking software comeback.

Outstanding visuals, particularly on a system as limited as the 2600, merit any new game a certain amount of attention. *Ms. Pac-Man* is more than just another "good game", because its graphics are tied to excellent play-action; excellent command control and individualized bonus prizes are just two of its pluses.

Certificate of Merit: *Burger Time* (Mattel/Intellivision). Some players despise this as a "cute game with teeth", and that's not far off the mark. Trying to put together a burger can land you in quite a pickle.

Certificate of Merit: *Dracula* (Imagic/Intellivision). Don the iron cloak of the Lord of the Undead in this pre- or two-player Intellivision cartridge. It's as exciting — though harmless — journey into the world of classic horror.

Certificate of Merit: *Keystone Kapers* (Activision/Atari 2600). Keystone Kelly's a man with a mission in this Gary Kitchen opus. He's running through a playground inspired by the silent movies of the 1920's on the trail of Harry Hooligan and his men.

VIDEOGAME OF THE YEAR (16K or more ROM memory)

LADY BUG

(Coleco/ColecoVision)

This game was merely a cult favorite, praised by the knowing few, when it held forth in the game parlors a couple of years back, but it really came into its own as a ColecoVision cartridge. The infusion of pinball-type scoring, and the need for quick-witted strategizing separate this Arkie-winner from run-of-the-maze labyrinth contents.

Lady Bug is a perfect illustration of the fact that two games can be packaged in the same overall game, yet be vastly different. Ms. Pac-Man and Lady Bug are both Videogames of the Year; they're both



multi-games — and can you think of a right-thinking home arcade set who'd willingly part with either?

Certificate of Merit: *Centipede* (Atari/Atari 5200). It's a long way from the traditional peaceful gardens of pastoral poetry to the thrill-a-minute excitement of Centipede, but gamers have streamlined down the path in record numbers. This is bug-blasting deluxe, packing most of the punch of the hit coin-op. And it's even better with Atari's new trackball controller.

Certificate of Merit: *Spanky*

(GCC/Vectrex). This fast-moving air-ball simulation views aero-ball action from a new perspective, a three-quarters pseudo-3-D design that makes the one of the most exciting flipper-game cartridges yet produced.

Certificate of Merit: *Zaxxon* (Coleco/ColecoVision). Grab the throttle of a sleek fighter and hold on tight! The player weaves over and around obstacles and weapons emplacements in the sky cities, zooms through a daylight in space against a squadron of drone planes and even battles the middle-of-the-night robot Zaxxon in the home edition of this play-for-pay classic.

BEST SCIENCE FICTION/FANTASY VIDEOGAME

VANGUARD

(Atari/Atari 5200)

This mono-directional scrolling shoot-out has turned out to be one of the most durable crowd-pleasers in gaming history. Still a stellar attraction for many coin-op machine operators, *Vanguard* is pre-



ently renowned in home arcading, too. Atari's own 2600 edition has proven a big seller, but it's the cartridge for the 5200 that really has players' mouths hanging open in astonishment.

The "secret" to *Vanguard*'s success is that players can't wait to fight through the zone they're currently in to see what new dangers await in the next one. Few home games can match the variety of action contained in this cartridge. With so many folks playing *Vanguard* these days, it's a safe bet that Earth has little to fear from the Grend.

Certificate of Merit: *Phoenix* (Atari/Atari 2600). The spiritual successor to last year's Arcade-winning *Descent Attack* sends waves of winged attackers against the player's lone cannon at the bottom of the screen. Invasion games will never die!

Certificate of Merit: *Moon Patrol* (Atari/Atari 2600). Less frenetic action is nicely balanced by charming graphics in this recently published home edition of the coin-op. And the wild linear side is harder to master than its innocent looks might lead gamers to expect.

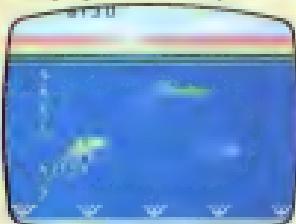
BEST VIDEOGAME AUDIO/VISUAL EFFECTS

(Less than 16K ROM memory)

DOLPHIN

(Activision/Atari 2600)

You've read all about the importance to players of hand-eye coordination, but designer Matt Hubbard has quite literally changed the rules of the game in *Dolphin*. Nimble fingers certainly won't hurt your score in this undersea chase, but hand-eye coordination is more important: The player's dolphin must navigate through the gaps in the vertical columns of sea horses, and only careful attention to the dolphin's sonar sense enables the player to steer the water-going mammal to safety.



Dolphin (Activision)

The dolphin also employs its sonar to get more energy. A seagull periodically flies across the top of the screen. The special tone that signals the event is the arcade's cue to make the dolphin leap into the air to touch the passing bird.

It's play-features like these which make *Dolphin* such a distinctive gaming experience.

Certificate of Merit: *B-17 Bomber* (Mattel/Intellivision). The decidedly unflinchingly skies of World War II provide the setting for the best of the cartridges designed for use with Mattel's Intellivision voice synthesis module. The cross-talk of the crew adds immeasurably to the excitement.

Certificate of Merit: *Dragonfire* (Imagic/Intellivision). Imagic's video treasure hunt was one of the 1983 cartridges which helped establish the California publisher as the top producer of third-party software for the Intellivision. *Dragonfire* is one of home arcading's most popular entrants in the "cave game" sweepstakes.

BEST VIDEOGAME AUDIO/VISUAL EFFECTS

(16K or more ROM memory)

DONKEY KONG JR.

(Coleco/ColecoVision)

Sequels seldom come out as well as the originals. *Donkey Kong Jr.* has firmly established its own unique claim to gaming



greatness: In 1983, finally and forever stepping out of the shadow of the jolly legendary *Donkey Kong*, the fact that DK Jr. isn't a rehash of the earlier one has helped it build an identity in the minds of players, who voted heavily for the design in this year's Arcade Award balloting.

The ColecoVision edition of *Donkey Kong Jr.* is an accurately detailed representation of the second chapter in this saga. Now, Mario has the big gorilla caged, and the player assumes the role of the mighty monkey's son to jump, climb and swing his way to where the super-villian is jailed and restore his freedom.

Certificate of Merit: *Qix* (Atari/Atari 5200). Here's a good example of

how blurry the line between videogames and computer games has become. The 5200 edition of *Qix* is significantly better than Atari's *Qix* for its line of computers. This abstract game of territorial acquisition looks just as good as it did in the commercial amusement centers.

BEST ACTION VIDEOGAME

RIVER RAID

(Activision/Atari 2600)

These are bad days for male chauvinists. First, EG research proves that female aracers play action games — and play them well — just like males. Then Carol Shaw goes out and shows that women can



RIVER RAID (Activision)

design action games just as well as any man, too. *River Raid* is squarely in the tradition of such Activision shoot-'em-ups as *Chopper Command*, and it wears its heritage nobly.

River Raid puts the home aracer in control of a fighter plane that is shooting enemy forces and positions on and around a river. As the vertically scrolling playfield scrolls by, the would-be jet jockey faces constant dangers from both sides and ahead — and there's no way to go back upstream for a breather when those enemy ships and planes come at you from all sides at once.

Certificate of Merit: *MegaForce* (Fox Videogames/Atari 2600). This scrolling shoot-out was one of the few cases in which a licensed property has spawned a game that sublimates the inspiration. "Megafire" wasn't much of a flick, but it sure makes an exciting land/air/battle extravaganza.

Certificate of Merit: *Polaris* (Tiger/Atari 2600). This multi-phase naval combat cartridge puts you at the periscope of an attack submarine. Threats come from the land, the sea and the air in this wacky nail-biter.

Certificate of Merit: *Super Cobra* (Parker Brothers/Atari 2600). This

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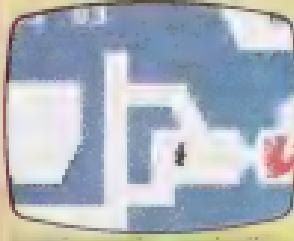
We put you in the game.

home edition of Konami's well-received coin-op is a cousin of *Vanguard* and provides the same brand of relentless, multi-scenario action. The graphics of the 2600 cart, though simple, nonetheless reflect at least the spirit of the arcade original.

BEST ADVENTURE VIDEOGAME ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

(Mattel/Intellivision)

Purists may carp that this video version of the game invented by Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and published by TSR lacks many of the elements that make the role-



playing game so absorbing and enriching. Any videogamer who enjoys adventure contexts, however, would instantly recognize that AD&D is a major step forward in the development of videogame adventure cartridges. *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* regularly placed high in the monthly popularity poll conducted by *IGS* and was probably the most popular title published for the system by any company in 1983.

AD&D puts the player at the head of a three-man team of explorers. The adventurers are moved around the terrain screen until a promising cave system is found and then it's down, down, down into a world of treasure and menace.

Certificate of Merit: *Jungle Hunt* (Atari/Atari 2600). Some cynics dismissed the Taito coin-op as "Pinball for the arcades," but Atari gets the last laugh with this multi-screen edition of the trap-filled action-adventure. The popular vote by *IGS* readers placed it only a shade behind the *Atari Winter*.

Certificate of Merit: *Tutankham* (Parker Brothers). Explore the labyrinthine passageways that honeycomb the tomb of the great Egyptian pharaoh Tutankham in this surprisingly handsome rendition of the 1982 coin-op sleeper hit.

BEST SPORTS VIDEOGAME ENDURO

(Activision/Atari 2600)

Just when it seems that every aspect of the 2600 system has been thoroughly exploited by the horde of programmers now designing cartridges for it, something new comes along like *Enduro*. The multi-phase racing game leaves all previous efforts in this category eating its dust.

Enduro actually runs in two rounds. The first run through the course is a mere tune-up. If the home racer drives skillfully enough, the program enters the auto in a real race against even stiffer competition. The idea of actually competing in a race against other cars is a welcome addition to the racing game genre, giving *Enduro* a



inner edge than cartridges that only ask the player to stay on the road as long as possible.

Certificate of Merit: *Real Sports Baseball* (Atari/Atari 2600). The hated Home Run is dead, and no one is shedding tears. One big reason is the timely appearance of this cartridge, one of the jewels in the *Real Sports* collection. This is arcade-style baseball at its best.

Certificate of Merit: *Real Sports Football* (Atari/Atari 2600). This cartridge, too, replaces an inferior title in the Atari 2600 catalogue. An easy-to-learn order entry system permits coaches to call a variety of plays on offense and defense.

COMPUTER GAME DIVISION

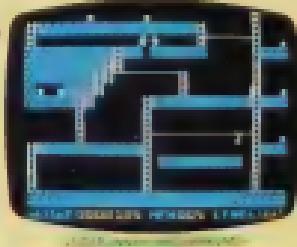
COMPUTER GAME OF THE YEAR LODE RUNNER

(Broderbund/Apple II)

This cartridge is further proof that gamers' tastes are growing more sophisticated as the hobby matures. It features solid audio-visual effects and realistic arcade action, but it also calls for some heavy strategic thinking. Those best able to negotiate the paths of *Lode Runner*'s 150 playfields are often the players who excel at solving the puzzles contained on every level rather than the joystick wizards with the flying fingers.

The software hunt for hidden gold is endlessly fascinating. Designer Doug Smith has combined a relatively small number of play elements — every playfield can be boiled down to a half-dozen or so different features — in unexpected ways that never fail to stretch a gamer's mental powers.

And for the real game-masters among us, there's an added attraction. Smith has provided a system by which even non-programmers can quickly construct custom-designed *Lode Runner* playfields.



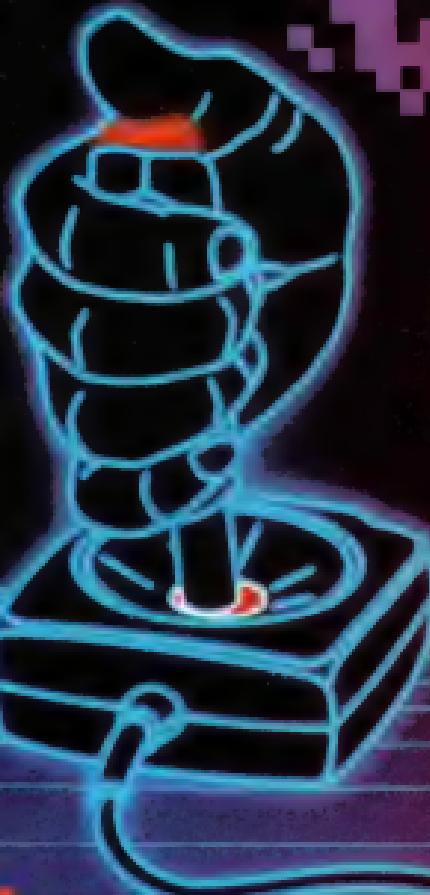
Certificate of Merit: *Repton* (Sirius/Apple II, Atari computer). The aliens want to see their doomsday device built as quickly as possible to destroy

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your planet, so you'd better use the firepower of your attack flyer to the max in this two-directional scrolling shoot-out. Even if the invaders achieve their goal, you've still got a second chance to save the day in the mini-scenario that takes place beneath the surface of the planet.

Certificate of Merit: *Shamus*, *Case II* (Synapse/Atari computers). The nefarious Shadow is back in town and up to his old tricks. Only the mysterious Shamus has what it takes to battle through room after room in the undersea fortress against the Shadow's hideous minions. Even better than the original *Shamus*.

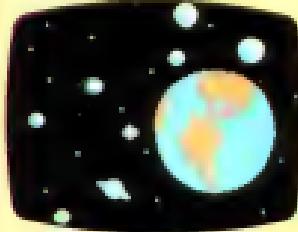
BEST SCIENCE FICTION-FANTASY COMPUTER GAME

Astro Chase

(First Star, Parker/Atari computers)

Fernando (My First Alphabet) Herrera demonstrates his wide range of interests by making this slam-bang space battle his first follow-up on that award-winning program. Of course, *Astro Chase* benefits mightily from Herrera's experience, and is an especially attractive and polished production. The animation in the title screen is the most elaborate preamble of this type any designer has ever concocted.

The heart of the game, in which the



ASTRO CHASE (CONTINUED)

player tries to shoot down enemy missiles and fighters as they converge on the Earth, is its thrust-fire system. This radically new fire-and-movement scheme permits the player's craft to rocket forward in one direction while spraying bullets whenever they are needed. (In older games using thrust propulsion, a ship could only fire directly ahead of itself.) The set-up takes a few rounds to learn, but the end result is well worth the extra trouble.

Certificate of Merit: *Caverns of Frostig* (Muse/Apple II). The monster-packed maze-maze stands ready to receive the challenge of your warrior in this

action adventure from the publisher which virtually created this category with last year's release of *Castle Wolfenstein*. The video warrior uses sword and — if the search for arrows goes well — bow to fight all the way to the lair of the evil dragon which must be destroyed.

Certificate of Merit: *Star Maze* (Si-Tech/Apple II). The fabulous space jewels are the prime attraction of the gigantic space maze that forms the playfield for *Star Maze*. The home arcade employs a thrust movement system to send a spaceship careening down the celestial corridors in search of booty. Watch out for the enemy ships, meteor storms and the never-to-be-forgotten bug train.

Certificate of Merit: *Suspended* (Infocom/Atari systems). They promised to make you only in the event that cataclysmic danger threatens our world. Now you're conscious, so the situation can't be good. The computerist must learn to coordinate the controls of a set of robots to solve the problem that threatens human survival in this brilliant prose science fiction adventure.

BEST COMPUTER ADVENTURE WITNESS

(Infocom/Atari systems)

Everyone agrees that graphic enhancement for adventure programs is the coming thing, but that hasn't prevented Infocom from taking two "Best Computer Adventure" Academy Awards in a row with its text-only approach to this genre. It just goes to show that there's still no real substitute for an individual person's imagination.

Witness' murder mystery is set in the 1930's, and the crude instruction booklet, which looks like a pulp magazine from the same era, does much to create the appropriate atmosphere. As the sleuth of the piece, who has been summoned to investigate a possible case of evil-doing, you've got to question suspects and fit together clues to catch the perpetrator of a murder which takes place right in front of your astonished eyes.

It would be impossible to even list *Witness'* many fine features, but the most important is probably the order-entry system developed by Infocom for the Zork series.



WITNESS (CONTINUED)

This system allows the player to enter commands in complete English sentences, issue multi-part orders and, in general, conduct business with some semblance of reality.

Certificate of Merit: *Atzec* (Da-da/Mont/Apple II). The abandoned Mexican tomb site atop a multi-level maze of great antiquity. You must guide your archaeologist along its monster-filled corridors in the action adventure. Can you find the valuable idol and bring it back to civilization?

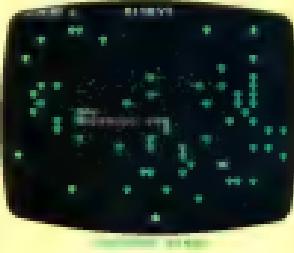
Certificate of Merit: *Dark Crystal* (Sierra On-Line/Apple II, Atari computers). The scattered shards of the dark crystal must be found in this lavishly illustrated adventure based on the Jim Henson movie of the same name. Although the plot follows the action of the film fairly closely, adventure-lovers will still enjoy this one even if they don't know the difference between a puppet and a muffin.

Certificate of Merit: *Knight of Diamonds* (Si-Tech/Apple II). The Wizardry series continued with this scenario designed for play with the high-level characters developed during the course of adventuring in the original game. Even wizards, magicians, clerics and thieves who rolled over the evil wizard Werdna are sure to have their gauntlets full in this one.

BEST COMPUTER ACTION GAME CENTIPEDE

(Atari/Atari computers)

Gardening was never like this! Many movers of the classic invasion games insist that this is the very best of all the home editions. The player uses a joystick or track-



ball to move a shooter horizontally and, to a limited extent, vertically around the lower portion of the playfield. The main target is the centipede that wriggles its way down the screen through the channels created by the numerous mushrooms. The player can shoot mushrooms for points and to induce the multi-segment bug to modify its route so that it becomes easier to destroy.

Meanwhile, an assortment of other insects keeps the player from focusing too much attention on those vital centipedes. More than one arachnid has gotten overly involved with knocking out the last seg-

ment of a bug only to be devoured by a pouncing spider as it hops across the bottom of the playfield.

Certificate of Merit: *Jumpman* (Epyx/Atari computers). As *Jumpman*, you must use your exceptional ability to leap and climb, to thoroughly search the complex and deactiviate the hidden bombs. *Jumpman* effectively blends action with a dash of humor and graceful animation to produce a multi-screen treat.

Certificate of Merit: *River Raid* (Activision/Atari computers). This is no mere rehash of the *Arktis*-winning videogame cartridge (see elsewhere in this feature). Activision has immeasurably improved the graphics, to be sure, but there's a lot more action than even the 2600 blasting can boast. The way the tanks along the river bank fire at the player's passing fighter jet is as attractive to watch as it is lethal to experience.

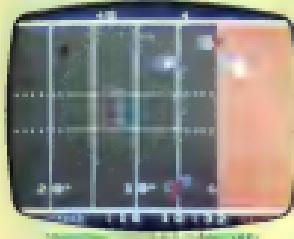
Certificate of Merit: *Sea Fox* See For (Broderbund/Apple II, Atari computers). Ed Hobbs' submarine arcade combat game starts at a leisurely pace, with just a line of hospital ships and a squadron of submarines protecting the convoy. But a few phases later, when those opposition subs are firing torpedoes, P.T. boats are dropping depth charges and mines are plowing a deadly path through the ocean, *Sea Fox* is hotter than hot.

BEST COMPUTER SPORTS GAME

STARBOWL FOOTBALL

(Gamestar/Atari computers)

This is the second year in a row that a football program for the Atari family of



computers has walked off with this particular Arktis. And it's no surprise at last year's winner, *Cyberball*, to say that continued advances in programming techniques have produced the finest action football game ever inserted into a disk drive.

Starbowl's most important advantage over previous pigskin simulators is that it is the first one which can be played solitaire

as well as head-to-head. So you can enjoy a rousing 60 minutes of gridiron thrills even when there isn't another football-crazed computerist in sight. An elegant order-entry system permits the offensive and defensive coaches to enter formations for offense and defense with a few flicks of the joystick, which keeps the action moving at a swift pace.

Certificate of Merit: *Baja Buggies* (Gamestar/Atari computers). Can your dune buggies roll over the sand fast enough to beat 80 other vehicles to the finish line? To succeed, you'll have to keep all four tires on the road and avoid potentially disastrous collisions with the other hell-bent drivers in this race.

Certificate of Merit: *International Soccer* (Commodore/Commodore 64). This one- or two-player contest was developed by one of Commodore's British designers, but it is now also available on this side of the Atlantic. Realistic soccer action is the key note here, and the detailed graphics and animation are utterly fantastic.

Certificate of Merit: *Knockout!* (Avlon/HI/Atari computers). A company which produces more non-electronic sports games than any other firm now turns its attention to the squared circle. This game-slapstick gives computerists a chance to test their ring savvy and, perhaps, see their champion's hands raised in victory by the referee.

BEST COMPUTER GAME

AUDIO-VISUAL EFFECTS

GORF

(Rakka/Atari computers)

This home version of the Billy Midway coin-op collected one of the largest vote totals of any game in the 1984 Arcade Award balloting, even outshining the excellent edition of *Gorf* produced by Coleco (for ColecoVision) and Commodore (for the Commodore 64) in the opinion of the voters.

Despite the fact that *Gorf* has, indeed, been with us for several years and in a range of formats, there's something about this multi-screen space shoot that keeps



electro-gamers coming back again and again. Even without the Galaxian-like phase found on the pay-for-play unit, there's plenty to keep even the richest trigger-finger well occupied.

Certificate of Merit: *Old Ironsides* (Xerox/Apple II). The name of the company may be unfamiliar as a software publisher, but Xerox has jumped into the front ranks with this ship-vs.-ship naval battle set in the romantic age of sail.

Certificate of Merit: *Transylvania* (Penguin/Apple II). If an illustrated adventure is only as good as its artwork, then Transylvania is very, very good. No adventure published in 1983 had visuals that even approached the beauty of design Antonio Antochia on this demented-in-district epic.

VIDEOGAME COMPUTER GAME DIVISION

MOST HUMOROUS VIDEOGAME-COMPUTER GAME

OINK!

(Activision/Atari 2600)

Mike Lonsdale's first design for Activision is a gaming commentary on the



OINK! © 1984 Activision

charming little fairytale of the three pigs nestled in their homes by the ravenous wolf. The wolf attacks the little pigs in their houses built of straw, wood and brick. He attempts to huff and puff and blow them down while the residents frantically pull building material from the roof and drop it into the gaps in the walls that the wolf's attack creates.

The pig screen points based on the number of bricks or panels of wood or straw that are placed properly in the walls of the houses. If the wolf breaks through and pulls the porker through the hole, the little piggy runs all the way home.

Certificate of Merit: *Froefall* (Sierra/Apple II). Mark (Greasier) Turnell certainly hasn't lost his touch with the Apple. This arcade-contest features one of the cutest on-screen characters around, and the way he flails his arms as he floats toward the waiting holes at the bottom of the playfield adds a lot of cheer to an otherwise straightforward action title.

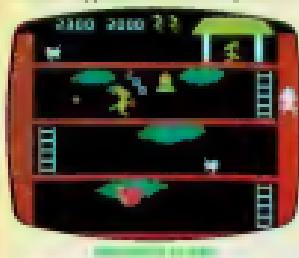
Certificate of Merit: K.C.'s *Kangaroo Chase* (Odyssey/Odyssey II). Although this company was fairly quiet on the software front during the period covered by this year's Awards, this voice-enhanced maze game kept Odyssey owners from losing heart. When K.C. moans a satisfied "that's nice," after gobbling the final duplicator segment, it's hard not to at least smile.

Certificate of Merit: *Prappel!* (Adventure International/Atari computers). Who says it's easy being human white bread? Not Wadsworth Overcash. The hero of *Prappel!* now finds fresh work painting three connected maze rooms while running for his life from radioactive frogs, runaway lawnmowers and hell-driven golf carts.

BEST ARCADE-TO HOME VIDEOGAME COMPUTER GAME TRANSLATION

KANGAROO
(Atari/Atari 5200)

Home game designers, particularly those charged with translating a game that first appeared in the family arcade,



ment criteria, have never been more concerned with the importance of graphics. In the case of the translator, the problem is that coin-op manufacturers have gone all out for cute games that stress super-duper graphics. When translating such titles for the home audience, the programmer's ability to match—or at least strongly echo—the visuals is crucial to the success of the cartridge.

In this case, the anonymous translator

has reached deep into his or her bag of tricks to come up with a virtual duplicate of the climbing game that racked up lots of quarters in early 1983. As you move the momma kangaroo around the multi-level playfield on her mission of rescue, just about everything looks and feels the way it did on the coin-op.

Certificate of Merit: *Frogger* (Parker Brothers/Atari computers). This isn't just equal to the coin-op. It's actually better in a couple of minor ways. No cartridge for the Atari computer this year can match this *Frogger* for the sheer beauty of the playfield and the tunefulness of its soundtrack.

Certificate of Merit: *Kick-Maze* (Commodore/Commodore 64). Maneuver the clown back and forth across the bottom of the screen as his unicycle in such a way as to enable him to catch or puncture the descending balloons in this near-perfect rendition of the Bally coin-op of 1982.

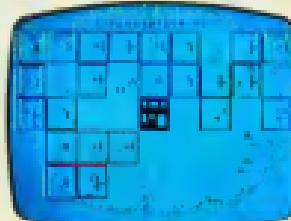
Certificate of Merit: *Turtles* (Odyssey/Odyssey II). What a perfect match of system and game! The Odyssey does a splendid job of presenting this pioneering "cate" maze game which had previously never been done for the home arcade market.

BEST MULTI PLAYER VIDEOGAME COMPUTER GAME M.U.L.E.

(Electronic Arts/Atari computers)

Few disks have hit the gaming world with the thunderous impact of this simulation of planetary exploration and development. Assuming the character of one of several spacefaring intelligent species, the player must stake out territory on a previously uncolonized planet and then attempt to attain power and riches through mastery of the art of buying cheap and selling dear.

Even leaving aside the hip-shaking rock music anthem that introduces it, *M.U.L.E.* stands out clearly from the usual run of games. It artfully combines elements of boardgame strategy with arcade-style entry of player commands to produce a contest that requires quick wits and fast fingers.



M.U.L.E. ELECTRONIC ARTS

as well as more ponderous long-range planning.

M.U.L.E. has become the object of a fast-growing cult of ardent players from coast to coast in the few short months since its release. After even a single round of play, the thinking gamer will know why.

Certificate of Merit: *Dungeon* (TSR/Apple II). Up to eight adventurers can explore a multi-level fortress in the electronic version of the conventional boardgame which has proven to be a family/social favorite. Fight the monsters and haul the treasure home first to win.

Certificate of Merit: *Oil Baron* (Epyx/Apple II). Drill for oil and then show I.R. bring a thing or two in this oil business simulation. It combines play on the screen with the use of a strikingly executed conventional board to create a detailed replica of the real-life situation without burdening the players with a lot of statistical housekeeping.

Certificate of Merit: *Wizard of War* (Nakkin/Atari computer). *Wizard of War* is an enjoyable solo, but it takes on a lot of added excitement when two ardent play cooperatively, each guiding a warrior through the treacherous series of labyrinthine playfields.

BEST EDUCATIONAL VIDEOGAME COMPUTER GAME LEARNING WITH LEEPER

(Sierra On-Line/Apple II)

Leeper keepers never quite made the grade as a Sierra On-Line action contest,

I	1
I	2
I	3
I	4
I	5

LEARNER'S LEARNING COMPUTER GAME

but the star of that mediocre contest has returned in triumph as the host for this quartet of programs aimed at educating and entertaining children who do not yet know how to read.

The four mini-segments of the disk are "Dog Count" (find the dogs by finding the correct stacks of bones), "Balloon Pop" (recognize shapes as an aid to reading readiness), "Leap Frog" (build hand-eye coordination) and "Painting" (free artistic

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expression in four colors). All are fun and, what's more, they're completely understandable by the average young child.

Certificate of Merit: Alphabet Arcade (POU/Atari computers). This reinforcement tool for elementary school-age youngsters is aimed at strengthening alphabetic and dictionary skills. Three different games prompt kids to practice something you'd normally have to be them down to get them to do.

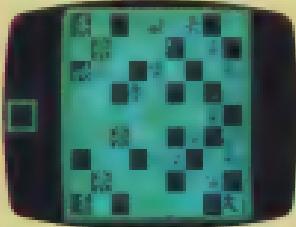
Certificate of Merit: Snopper Troops, Case #2 (Spinmaster/Atari computers). Someone has taken Lily the Dolphin from the Tabasco Aquarium, and now it's up to the Snopper Troops to play detective and get the precious mammal back. Along the way, this cleverly illustrated adventure encourages children to perfect such useful skills as taking notes, making maps and organizing large amounts of information.

MOST INNOVATIVE VIDEOGAME COMPUTER GAME

ARCHON

(Electronic Arts/Atari computers)

No strategy game makes better use of the special capabilities of the computer than Archon, a product of the fertile minds at Foothill Associates. Archon is a semi-



abstract contest between the forces of light and those of darkness contested on a board of eight by eight squares.

If that sounds like chess or checkers, it should, since Archon is squarely in the same tradition as those centuries-old pastimes. It is the computer, however, which endows Archon with its special flavor. The movement squares are not static, but rather change color as the play progresses. When they are white or light, they confer an advantage to a piece of similar hue which is stationed on one. When they are grey or black, both squares have a similar effect on the forces of darkness.

When one piece attempts to capture another, the "battle" is not quite as cut-

and-dried as in chess. Instead, the combatants are transformed to a blurring of the square, which functions as an arena to decide ownership of the square.

Short of reprinting a full-length review from *Electronic Games*, it would be impossible to enumerate all the novel features of Archon. Suffice it to say, then, that this is one game no one will ever tar with the "me, too!" label.

Certificate of Merit: Galactic Gladiators (Strategic Simulations). This is the best game in the series of Rapid Fire titles whichSSI premiered early in 1983. The system provides play speed to real action games while providing the opportunity for players to exercise their strategic faculties in a game of man-to-man arena combat among alien racers.

Certificate of Merit: Flipball Construction Set (Electronic Arts/Apple computers). All a computer needs to do to create a video pinball game is take joystick in hand and head designer Bill Budge's simple-as-pe mechanics. In just a few minutes, you'll have created your own electronic flipper game — and there's no programming knowledge necessary.

Certificate of Merit: Moonshot (Creative Software/Commodore 64). The one thing you can count on is that no one will mistake this day-glo-looking contest of strategy and maneuver on the cosmic scale for any other electronic game. Its picture-perfect graphics are totally unique in the gaming world.

COIN-OP GAMES DIVISION

COIN-OP GAME OF THE YEAR

POLE POSITION

(Atari)

Whether you play this one standing up or sitting down — the latter generally takes an extra quarter — the result is the same: gaming satisfaction. For the first time in the amusement parks, a first-person racing game gives a higher reward for passing and finishing among the leaders rather than for just keeping all four wheels on the



POLE POSITION (Atari)

road, thus making driving an art.

Another big contributor to the popularity of Pole Position is its beautiful graphics. The scenery is breathtaking as you whiz along the winding track, and the rival vehicles look pretty spiffy, too. Another good feature is the two-head format for the user itself. The opportunity to drive a second time against tough competition is irresistible.

Certificate of Merit: Frontline (Taito). This arcade approach to the dirty business of infantry combat forces the player to keep moving and living constantly. The action is non-stop in this attractive shoot-'em-up, which is scheduled for release as a home game from Coleco for the ColecoVision by the time this issue hits the newsstands.

Certificate of Merit: Just (Williams). This is a rarity in the coin-op world, a machine that plays either solo or head-to-head. See if your heavily armored and armed cruiser can defeat the endless enemies which seek to destroy him.

Certificate of Merit: Super-Pac-Man (Bally/Midway). Bally has pulled off quite a feat with the introduction of this sequel to the world's best-known maze game. It's sufficiently faithful to Pac-Man to merit the name, yet it also offers some novel features that radically change the complexion of the game. The size- and speed-changing options really freshen up a pay-for-play classic.

BEST SCIENCE FICTION FANTASY COIN-OP GAME

XEVIOUS

(Atari)

The title refers to the enemies from space which have landed at Machu Picchu, the ancient landing site of the space-going



XEVIOUS (Atari)

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gods according to legend. The gamer controls the Sesshou, a sophisticated jet fighter that can blast away at land or sea targets with equal ease. The mission — you know this already didn't you? — is to push the Reikou Forces back into space and save the planet.

The play-mechanic is a throwback to the space shooters that dominated the arcades during 1981 and 1982, but *Kerakou* is anything but dated. It challenges players with an unusually wide range of alien targets and varied tactical situations, each one requiring near-instantaneous response from the arcade at the controls.

Certificate of Merit: *Jungle Hunt*. *Mundi* (*Taito*). This multi-part action-adventure got off to a rocky start when the Edgar Rice Burroughs estate forced Taito to change the design's original name, but *Jungle Hunt* still managed to become a well-loved coin-op despite this obstacle.

Certificate of Merit: *Star Trek*. *Sega*. Like *Zaxxon*, *Star Trek* has had to carry the stigma of being too hard for novices while being beautiful to look at. Evidently, most gamers have learned how to meet its challenge with at least some success, because it has proven a popular favorite and solid money-earner.

MOST INNOVATIVE COIN-OP GAME

O'BERT

(Mytaly)

All innovations aren't necessarily based on technological breakthroughs. When a designer comes up with a totally fresh play-mechanic, that should certainly qualify as an innovation, too. It's that kind of inspired thinking that has landed O'Bert at the top of the Arcade Award pyramid. The color-changing concept has made O'Bert an arcade mainstay, and the idea is sure to



O'BERT: MYTALY

find its way into dozens of coin-op and home arcade programs this year and next.

The block-hopper has, indeed, become a celebrity virtually overnight, with television appearances and other licensed spin-offs. The excitement shouldn't overshadow the star the game itself has created, however, with its easy-to-learn mechanics and tantalizing elusive goal of recoloring the blocks of the pyramid by having the little block jump on them one or more times each.

Certificate of Merit: *Baby Pac-Man*. *Mytaly/Midway*. Here's another successful switcheroo on the basic Pac-Man theme. What makes this sequel so innovative? It's the best blend of videogame and coin-op play elements any manufacturer has yet produced.

BEST COIN-OP GAME AUDIO-VISUAL EFFECTS DRAGON'S LAIR

(Cinematronics)

The world's first videodisc coin-op won the popular voting in this category by the



DRAGON'S LAIR: CINEMATRONICS

biggest margin of any Arcade Award recipient. Not exactly a surprise, eh? Playing this adventure contest is more like assuming the role of the star in a really well-animated cartoon movie. You, as the valiant knight, must think and fight your way past more than 30 different challenges, all rendered in lifelike, intricate and colorful detail.

Clearly, *Dragon's Lair* is but the first of a long line of games that combine the powers of the computer with those of the videodisc. Yet it is an impressive starting point, and the overwhelming public acceptance of the game, which set weekly sales records of more than \$1,000 per machine, testifies to Dan Bush's magnificent design achievement.

Certificate of Merit: *Sluggertime*. *Data East/Midway*. Working at the hamburger stand was never so hazardous as it is in this "date" game. The cartoon graphics provide just the proper ambience for this race to assemble a tasty fast food sandwich.

Certificate of Merit: *Popeye*

(Nintendo). Top-quality animation and bell-clear sound earned this climbing game its coveted Certificate of Merit. All the E.C. Segar characters are included in the game and are instantly recognizable to spinach-eaters everywhere.

STAND-ALONE GAMES DIVISION

STAND-ALONE GAME OF THE YEAR

O'BERT

(Parker Brothers)

This cube-climber cops another honor thanks to the Parker Brothers table-top unit that bears its famous name. This is a well-constructed device which features a large, centrally mounted joystick that's more than sufficient for guiding the bouncy bad around the block pyramid that forms the playfield.

Like the coin-op and home arcade editions, this one starts the fun at a level that even a fumble-fingered novice should be able to master. Once the first round's four phases are finished, however, the going gets much tougher. Changing each block's color two or three times calls for some smart hoppin'. If you're to avoid creatures such as Curley the Snake, who want nothing more than to stop O'Bert's fun,



O'BERT: PARKER BROTHERS

Certificate of Merit: *Donkey Kong Jr.* (*Coleco*). The shape of the housing may be unfamiliar to fans of Coleco's mini-arcades, but the quality should ring some bells. This is a surprisingly tautish version of the game which wowed 'em in the game parties under the Nintendo banner.

Certificate of Merit: *Ms. Pac-*

Man (Coleco). Eight different mazes distinguish this edition of Bally's coin-op hit. The bright fluorescent display is easy on the eyes during long play periods — and with a game this good, that comes in mighty handy!

MINI-ARCADE GAME OF THE YEAR 3-D SKY ATTACK (Tomy)

The hand-held unit resembles a slide-viewer or perhaps a pair of binoculars. But once it's operating and the player puts eyes



3-D SKY ATTACK (TOMY)

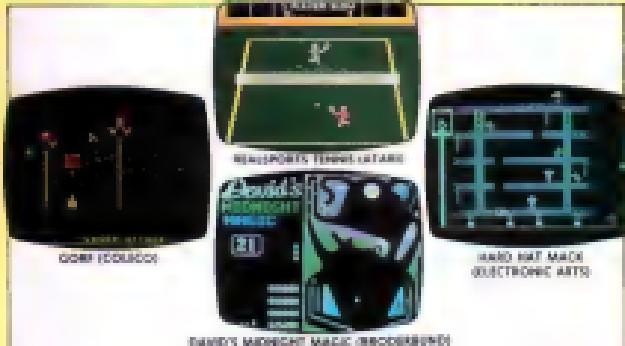
Contenders for Next Year's Arkies

The Arcade Award polls had barely closed when software publishers began the new gaming year by flooding the market with lots of nifty entertainment programs aimed at the holiday shopping season. Of course, many of these games will get their due next year.

The editors of PC, however, are keenly aware that many readers use the rundown of the Arkie winners as a guide to Christmas purchases. Since we certainly don't want you to overlook the best of the newest, here's a brief listing:

Videogames: Barraboff (Coleco/ColecoVision); Battleground (Atari/Atari 2600); Blue Print (Commodore/Commodore 64); Bungi (First Star/Atari 2600); Gak (Selkow & Ritter/Atari 2600); Jeopardy! (Atari/2600 & 5200); Mindmaster (Starpath/Colecovision); Nova Blast (Atari/Colecovision); Space Invader (Atari 2040/Atari 7/Tiger/Atari 2600); Pole Position (Atari/Atari 2600 & 5200); Gravit (Parker Brothers/Atari 5200); Star Trek (Sega/Atari 2600); Super Cobra (Parker Brothers/Atari 5200); Swat (Starpath/several systems); Time Pilot (Coleco/Colecord); Wings (CBS/Atari 2600); and War Room (Playtex 2000/Colecovision).

Computer games: Auto Chase (Parker Brothers/Atari); Blue Max (Synapse/Atari); Close Assault (Avalon Hill/Atari); Flip Flop (First Star/Atari); Lady Tut (Program/Apple); Lihmpas (Radian/Atari); Mind Man (Program/Apple); The Count (Program/Apple); Pathfind King (Avalon Hill/Apple); Save New York (Creative Software/Commodore 64); Starstruck Baseball (Gamestar/Atari); and Whirlywind (Broderbund/Apple).



DAVID'S MIDNIGHT MAGIC (BRODERBUND)

FLASH GORDON (Epyx/Atari 2600)

REALSPORTS TENNIS (ATARI/ATARI 2600)

More Great Home Arcade Games

The percentage of videogames and computer games which actually win Arcade Awards and Certificates of Merit is tiny compared to the total number of eligible titles. That's why there's a third tier in the awards structure, the annual list of Honorable Mentions.

These are two categories of games listed. The first includes games which are just a tick behind the Arkie and Certificate winners in quality. The second category consists of excellent — even Arkie-winning caliber — games that are ineligible to win an award for a variety of good, technical reasons. For instance, Broderbund's *Choplifter!* cartridge for the Atari computers goes onto the Honorable Mention roll only because another version of the same game won an Arkie last year.

Now let's hit the lists:

Videogames: Attack of the Terrors (Odyssey/Odyssey 2); Bedlam (C2Electronics); Blitz (C2Electronics); CastleWalk (Commodore/Atari 2600); Countermeasures (Atari/Atari 5200); Cross Force (Spectravision/Atari

to less); the vision behind is a multi-colored picture of all-out war in space. Tommy's 3-D units literally add an extra dimension to stand-alone games, and this science fiction opus is, by a narrow margin, the best of the trio.

Certificate of Merit: Emergency (Hudson). This game, which also contains a watch and a radio, calls upon the player to pull off a deep space rescue. Disk Drivin' had nothing on the design staff at Hudson.

Certificate of Merit: Space Invaders (Tiger). The great games of yesterday never die, they just come back in improved editions.

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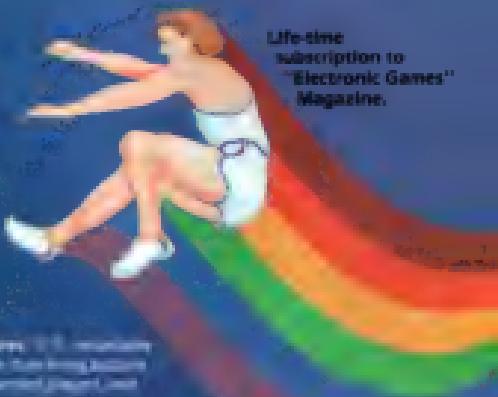
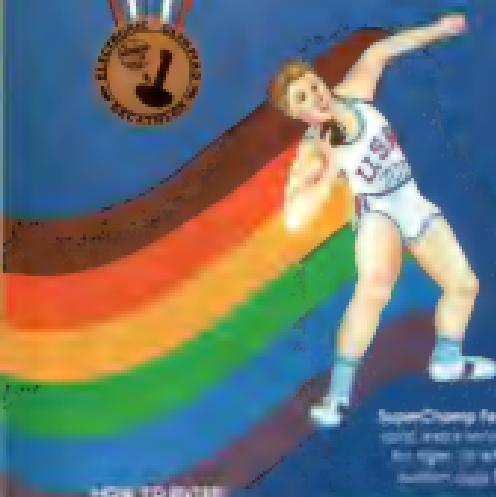
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- It is important to note that the results presented here are based on a small sample size and further research is needed to confirm these findings.

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- Journal of Democracy
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THE PLAYERS GUIDE TO ATARI COMPUTER SOFTWARE

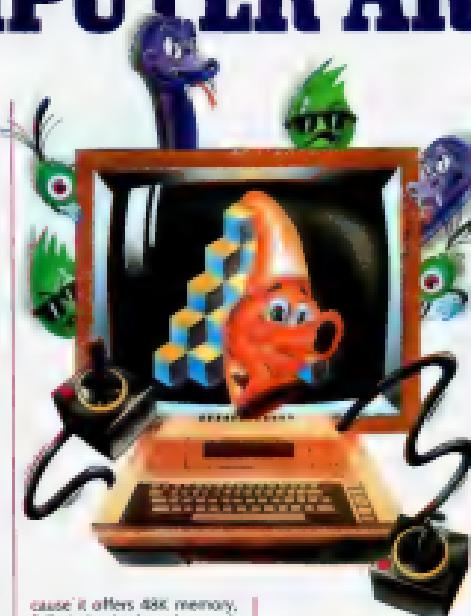
THE TOP COMPUTER ARCADE

THE GAMERS' CHOICE

Once upon a time — and it wasn't much longer than two years ago — the king of the home gaming mountain was the Apple II+ computer. Despite a system price perilously close to \$2,000, limited color display and pipsqueak sound generation, the Apple was the machine on which more games were played than on any other.

This state of affairs was firmly rooted in the fact that the Apple II was — and is — the darling of computer hobbyists. Its high-powered memory and easily modifiable configuration makes it just about the perfect unit for the dedicated electronic browser. Many of today's top game designers cut their computing teeth on an Apple, and so that is the system for which most new games were designed during the 1981-1982 period.

Things started to change when the Atari 400 and 800 systems reached the market. The 800, in particular, has won the admiration of computerists everywhere, be-



cause it offers sixix memory, full-stroke keyboard, superb graphics resolution and unequalled sound (through the TV) at an affordable price. The new series of Atari machines — 600XL, 800XL, 1400XL and 1450XL — are compatible successors and

THE SOFTWARE BOOM

Software publishing executives often say that it takes about a year after a system is introduced before independent products start providing titles for it. Though Atari's own efforts insured that there would be some excellent entertainment software right from the start, this axiom has proven quite accurate in the case of the Atari computer family.

By the end of 1982, disks for use with the 800 (and the 400s with upgraded memory) had become quite prevalent. Most were translations of games originally designed for the Apple. While a few programmers quickly learned to take advantage of Atari's unique features, most simply transposed programs from Apple to Atari without making any major alterations and improvements.

By the start of 1983, however, the Atari began to come into its own as a home computer arcade. Other companies such as Parker Brothers, Thorne-EMI,

sport most of the same advantages, plus a few extra pluses for good measure.

All of which goes to show that Atari is serious about gaming and non-gaming applications.

Broderbund and K-Byte (now distributed under the CBS banner) put game programs into easy-to-load cartridges, while the likes of Synapse, Adventure International, First Star, Gamestar and Electronic Arts released disks that capitalized on the video visual strengths of the Atari computer.



BREAKING THE

CURRENT COIN-OP HITS

At one time, a minimum of a year generally passed between the time a game made a reputation in the family amusement centers and its release date as a program for the home audience. Not any more. Introduction still isn't simultaneous, but the gap be-



MONSTER MUNCH (Atari 400/800)

tween the two publications dates has narrowed appreciably in the last 12 months. This means that a computer can now enjoy a relatively new game almost as soon as the play-for-pay machine



MONSTER MUNCH



LUPIN CORAL (Rabbit Brothers)

variations in the arcades.

Zaxxon and Frogger are typical of games which scored huge success on the home front a matter of months after taking the nation's arcades by storm. DataSoft has done a fairly good job in translating the scrolling shoot-out for the Atari (on disk), while On-Line (disk) and Parker Brothers



DISNEY'S BAILLY OF PARIS

(cartridge) have done likewise for Frogger. Parker Brothers' Frogger is the embodiment of outstanding programming, easily out-doing even the 48K disk version. Its vibrant audiovisuals, especially the sound-

track, even outdo the coin-op original in the opinion of some.

Parker Brothers is also the publisher of a couple of other arcade-to-home translations of note for the Atari. The venerable scrolling shoot-out, Super Cobra, and the current color-changing sensation, Q*Bert, are both now available on cartridge for the Atari line of personal computers. "Sensational" is about the



MONSTER MUNCH

insect adjective that can



justly be applied to either.

Other top-notch play-for-pay machines that have metamorphosed into computer programs include Galaxian and Donkey Kong (Atari) and Gorf and Wizard of Wor (Parker).

COIN-OP CLASSICS COME HOME

A big part of Atari's software commitment to its computer is the on-going program of translating classics of the commercial game pattern for play at home.

The company's first group of cartridges included Missile Command, Space Invaders and



THE PLAYERS GUIDE TO

ATARI COMPUTER SOFTWARE



Today, more games are published for the Atari than for any other system. Even better, programmers are getting comfortable with the system and thus gaining the necessary insight to radically improve the state-of-the-art of home computer gaming, which ultimately means better games for the user.

GAME BARRIER



POOL (ATARI)

and Asteroids, all three of which are surely among the most popular electronic games of all time. More recently, the company has delighted its fans with computer versions of newer, though hardly less popular, attractions like Pac-Man, Defender, Dig-Dug and Centipede.

Atari has long displayed a marked preference for putting its gamesware out on cartridge rather than disk. (One exception: Space Invaders first appeared on cassette,

because Atari wanted to rush it into the stores as quickly as possible.) This approach appears to stem from two main considerations. The first is that only a small percentage of Atari owners had disk drives until mid-1983, and the other is that the company felt its customers, most of whom are obviously non-technical, were already familiar with the plug-and-play routine of using cartridges.



PIG (ATARI)

As a result, Atari-manufactured game cartridges are the most widely distributed programs in all of computer gaming. They regularly sell in the hundreds of thousands, side by side with games from other manufacturers, which sell one tenth as many copies. The fact hasn't been missed by independent software publishers, either. Coupled

with a major upswing in the number of diskdrives, this has induced many companies to embark on ambitious release schedules for their fun software. Some companies are packing two formats in each package.



YOU SPELL "ACTION" A-T-A-R-I

CREATIVITY LIGHTS UP THE HOME FRONT

Little by little, the Atari computers, particularly the workhorse 800, have wormed their way into the affections of a legion of programmers who previously thought the sun rose and set by the Apple II. During the end of 1983, new games reached market which, for the first time, really exploited the potential of the

Atari. Let loose to play with this high-powered system, game creators are starting to conjure up titles which rank with the best ever flashed across a video screen.

MINER STRIKES GOLD

The granddaddy of the original designs for the Atari computer is Indisputably *Miner*

2049er, winner of the 1984 Grand Arcade Award for Best Electronic Game of the Year. Bill Hayes' previous design experience revolved around the TRS-80 computer, but he proved to be a fast learner. Despite his status as a sound and graphics neophyte — the TRS-80 is notoriously deficient in both areas — he crafted a



MINER 2049ER, MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE

jumping and climbing contest for his Big Five Software

that has since gone into editions for just about every computer and videogame system in the world.

JUMPING FOR JOY

Epyx, the company formerly known as Automated Simulations, has shown signs of renewed vigor, as new president Michael Katz turns the pioneering software house toward production of action-adventure programs many of which are intended for play on the

Atari.

Jumperman is the first Epyx release since *Crush*, *Cramble* and *Champ* to really create a stir among gamers. This multi-playfield climbing and jumping contest pits the player, or Jumperman, against time in a race to collect all the ex-



JUMPERMAN, Epyx



SHAMUS VS. SHAMUS

globose charges set by sinister forces which have picked the security shield at the complex Jumperman is pledged to guard. The fluid animations — Jumperman looks like Moreyov when he leaps from girder to girder — and variety of on-screen action are the main strengths.

Still, Jumperman was far from perfect. Last fall, I pips brought out Jumperman II, a cartridge game that is part sequel and part fix-up. Although it has fewer different playfields than the original disk program, Jumperman Jr.'s 10 screens offer enough mental and physical challenges to keep the most frisky Aladdin content for hours of play. The cart is also free of the minor, but annoying, glitches that marred the otherwise superb Jumperman.

THE SCOURGE OF SHADOWS

The Shadow is a mysterious noir cat who, like Sherlock Holmes' Moriarty, is re-



THE SHADOW (Electronic Arts)



THE SHADOW (Electronic Arts)

sponsible for at least half of what's evil in the world. From his heavily fortified and defended Hideout, he advances either forth to decapit the innocent. Only the Shamus has the courage to face the hon of the underworld in his own

dark and dirty den.

Shamus and Shamus, Case II (Synapse Software), are action-adventure programs that require a quick mind as well as a fast finger on the action button. They provide a blend of intense shoot-em-up action and opportunities to out-hex the hexes doctored by the Shadow with clever play.

HERE COMES ACTIVISION!

No videogame software house has had a finer reputation when it comes to making games for the Atari 2600 than Activision. Like most other outfitts that once specialized exclusively in videogame cartridges, Activision isn't blind to the computer gaming boom and, this past fall, it

dresses up the basic concept with better sound and graphics and adds an intriguing two-player version. It's a good job, but it's totally



PRINCE OF THE PREPPIES

PRINCE OF THE PREPPIES

What's even more fun than a bracing round of Ruth Wetmore's Preppie (Adventure International)? Why, a bracing game of Preppie II by the very same author. The sequel picks up where the first disk ended, with Wetmore doing an even more superlative job on the graphics and musical accompaniment than he did the first time.

Preppie II challenges the player to direct the hero, Wadsworth Overcash, through three interlocking



PREPPIE II: ADVENTURE INT'L.

maze-rooms, which he must paint. Unfortunately, there are radioactive frogs, laser-sabers and golf carts in the way.

A CAST OF THOUSANDS

It would be impossible to more than list a portion of the excellent library of software now available for the Atari computers. Some of the best include: *M. Apocalypse* and *Blue Max* (Synapse), *Utopia*



moved tentatively into the computer software market with a pair of souped-up versions of already popular videogames.

Kaboom! is an acknowledged classic of the home screen. The computer edition

is considerably more elaborate than in the 2600 cartridge. Throw in new targets and more terrain variety, and you've got a fine videogame that has become an outstanding piece of computer game software.



KABOOM! (Synapse Software)



ASTRO CHASE (Electronic Arts)



THE ATARI COMPUTER SOFTWARE BUYERS GUIDE

(Apkian), *Hand Hat Mack* (Electronic Arts), *Astro Chase* (Parker Brothers), *Flip Flop* (First Star) and *Tail of Beta Lyrae* (Printhead).

ATARI GAMES THE

WARGAMING AND THE ATARI COMPUTER

The excellent high-resolution graphics available on the Atari computers makes the system just about ideal for the presentation of computerized military strategy games. Today's electronic wargames are quite similar in many respects to the conventional boardgames produced by Avalon Hill, Game Designers Workshop, Yaquinto Games and others of that ilk, but the computerized type does have some attractive advantages.

One important plus is that most of the newer computer wargames provide armchair generals with several different views of the battlefield. That means you can pan across an entire front to get the big picture, and then zero in on a small engagement involving a handful of units with the flick of a joystick or, at most, the press of a couple of keys.

Yet even that advantage pales next to the benefits gamers derive from the computer's ability to streamline the play-routine. The machine can carry the heavy bookkeeping burden that invariably goes with multi-map war boardgames, which the players themselves would otherwise have to bear. A so-called monster game (meaning a conventional wargame that involves hundreds, even thousands of individual pieces and at least two or three full-size maps) can take an entire weekend to finish. The same sort of game transferred to the computer — like Strategic Simulations' *Guadalcanal Campaign* — is still lengthy, but not the gaudy test that, say, Avalon Hill's non-electronic "Third Reich" is.

THE COMPUTER WARGAME SUPERPOWERS

Whether you enjoy ancient warfare or modern tank battles, the clash of huge armadas or skirmishes between rival platoons, there's bound

to be at least one electronic wargame that fits the bill. And of course, tanks or air and naval combat haven't been neglected, either.

Strategic Simulations has become the top producer of computerized wargames. Although the company began by making disks for the Apple II, most of the best titles from its catalog have been translated for the Atari, and a majority of the company's re-

cent titles have made their debut with editions for the Atari.

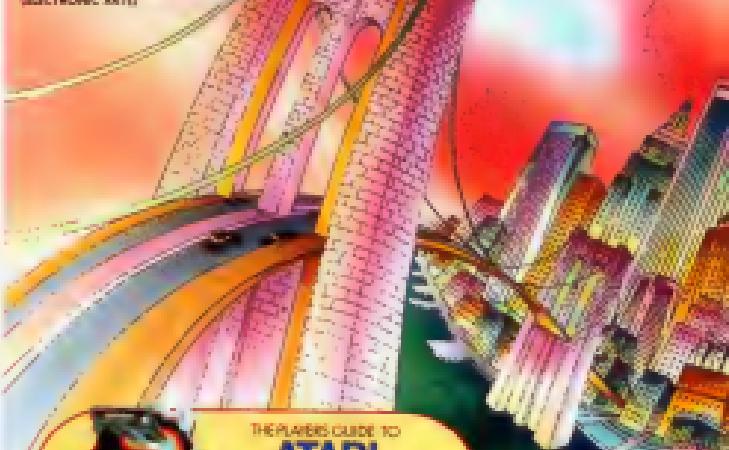
SSI games are characterized by solid, if not exhaustive research, a good "feel" (appropriate for period, place and type of combat) and good "visuals." The company has not shirked from taking older titles and refreshing them in light of programming improvements, so that the line as a whole is always at or near the current state of the

art. Exceptionally complete and lucid instruction booklets, usually enhanced with sections on the historical background and hints for better play, are among the very best in the electronic gaming world. Fact is, if you like the military period covered by an SSI disk, the odds are very good that you will also find the game stimulating and enjoyable.

Avalon Hill has found the



MURDER ON THE ZEPPELIN
ELECTRONIC ATARI



THE PLAYERS GUIDE TO

ATARI
COMPUTER
SOFTWARE



THINKERS PLAY

move from conventional to electronic wargames is a lot bumpier than anticipated. The meticulous craftsmanship that serves the publisher so well in its main sphere of operations has sometimes resulted in titles standing unlaunched on the shelf for too long in the computer game field. That means that a game developed to state-of-the-art 1982 standards might not be marketed until 1984, at which



COURTESY OF AVALON HILL

time it might look dated as a result of the rapid improvement in wargame programming that has taken place in the interim.

Tactic and *Legionnaire* are the best of Avalon Hill's pre-1984 releases. The latter is undoubtedly a pret and ranks as the best electronic game available covering Ro-



COURTESY OF AVALON HILL

man warfare. More recently, AH has evidenced a marked upswing in quality right across the whole line. Especially worth checking out are *TAC* and *Close Assault*.

Broderbund certainly doesn't rate as a computer wargame superpower — yet if the company's new *Whirlwind* program is any indication, then the Big Two may soon become the Big Three. Though best-known for slick action games, Broderbund proves with this title that strategy games aren't beyond its corporate expertise, either.

SUBTLE AND SLY STRATEGIES

ENTER ELECTRONIC ARTS

Electronic Arts hasn't been in business very long, but gaming connoisseurs already consider the house name synonymous with quality in the area of strategy games. The first half-dozen EA discs include at least three that belong in the collection of every Atarian who enjoys contests that give the grey matter a good workout.

Murder on the Zindess casts the gamer as one of eight famous detectives. There's been a murder on a trans-Atlantic dirigible, and you've got to question suspects, hunt for clues and wrak-



COURTESY OF ELECTRONIC ARTS

ATARI GAMES THE THINKERS PLAY

LOGIC GAMES FOR YOUR BRAIN

The secret to getting more out of your computer is to learn the games and software that it can play. If you're looking for something to challenge your mind, here are some great games and software packages that will keep you entertained.

The first game that comes to mind is the classic chess program. Chess is a game of strategy that requires a lot of thought and planning. You'll need to learn how to move pieces around the board and anticipate your opponent's moves.

Chess is a great way to practice your strategic thinking skills. It's also a great way to pass the time. You can play chess online or with friends. There are many different ways to play chess, so there's something for everyone. You can even play chess with your dog! Just make sure they understand the rules of the game before you start playing.

THE ATARI COMPUTER SOFTWARE

Atari Computer Software offers a wide variety of software titles for the Atari 8-bit computers. From classic games like Space Invaders and Asteroids to educational programs like Math Games, there's something for everyone.

One of the best logic games that I've found is a game called "Sudoku". It's a great way to challenge your mind and improve your problem-solving skills.

"Sudoku" is a logic puzzle that requires you to fill a 9x9 grid with numbers from 1 to 9. The goal is to fill the grid so that each row, column, and 3x3 subgrid contains all the numbers from 1 to 9. It's a great way to challenge your mind and improve your problem-solving skills.

Another great logic game is "Tetris". It's a classic game that requires you to fit various shapes into a grid. The goal is to clear the screen by fitting the shapes into the grid. It's a great way to challenge your mind and improve your problem-solving skills.

There are many other logic games available, such as "Sudoku" and "Tetris". These games require you to think logically and solve puzzles. They are great ways to challenge your mind and improve your problem-solving skills.



Atari Computer Software offers a wide variety of software titles for the Atari 8-bit computers. From classic games like Space Invaders and Asteroids to educational programs like Math Games, there's something for everyone.

SUBTLE AND SLY STRATEGIES

EDUCATIONAL, LOGICAL THINKING SKILLS

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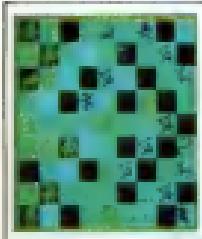
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ATARI
COMPUTER
SOFTWARE

up-the-case before the Zinder-
naul docks. It plays differently
each time, making it a fine
choice for the solitaire
enthusiast.

Archon is a chess-like battle
between the forces of light
and those of darkness. On-
screen prompts continually
remind the players — Archon
can be enjoyed head-to-head
or solo against the computer —
about the movement and
fighting abilities of the pieces,
making the break-in period



ARCHON ELECTRONIC ARTS

that always occurs after booting a complicated new game less traumatic.

M.U.L.E. is an electronic boardgame with arcade overtones that concerns colonization of previously unsettled planets. The idea is to claim and develop parcels of land, trade with fellow colonists, and amass a fortune without driving the new settlement to extinction with your sharp business practices.

M.U.L.E. is one of the few programs that makes use of the Atari 800's four joystick ports, since it allows that number of humans to compete at the same time. (The computer will also play, though not always well.)

TALES OF KING ARTHUR

A couple of interesting strategy games with an Arthurian slant have reached market in recent months. **Rag Arthur's Hair** (Epyx) sends the player on a quest to prove his worthiness to wear the crown of England, while **Recaliber** (West Program Exchange) is Chris Crawford's monumental military-diplomatic strategy game set in the days when the Knights of the Round Table met regularly in Camelot.



SPORTS SPECTACULARS FOR THE ATARI

BATTER UP!

There's not much question about which is the best baseball simulation for the Atari. The hands-down choice must be Gamestar's **Starleague Baseball**. Although it's relatively new, Starleague has already collected a stadium full of ardent fans and is certainly an "early 'live" favorite.



STARLEAGUE BASEBALL
(Gamestar)

To capture a 1985 Arcade Award when it comes time to vote later this year.

Not only does Starleague Baseball have the best graphics ever to grace the type of game, but the on-screen action is remarkably faithful to the real-life sport. Although fans of statistical replay games may not be totally satisfied with the action-oriented approach, this one is hard to beat no matter what the gamer's personal taste in diamond disks.

TOUCHDOWN!

You know the Atari is well-



ATARI GAMES, TOUCHDOWN!
(Gamestar)

provided with pigskin games when two titles win back-to-back Arikis. That's just what Cypher Bowl and Starbowd did. The newer program is a shade better, but neither is anything less than spot-on. Use of joystick input lets coaches choose from a wide variety of offensive and defensive plays in both of these games without forcing gamers to get bogged down in a lot of between-plays typing.

More cerebral football fans should also investigate Aaron Hill's **Football Strategy**. It's available on either disk or tape for the Atari computers and emphasizes carry play-calling rather than mastery of the joystick.

Basically a thinking game, Football Strategy lets the gamer choose his team from the Super Bowlinists of the past. As with the two above games, plays are input via



FOOTBALL STRATEGY
(Aaron Hill)

the joystick, but unlike them, the gamer gets to see the squad line up.

HIT THE ICE

Thorn Evil, which already makes the best soccer game for the Atari family of computers, has done even better with its recently published **Hockey**. It features a full complement of skaters on each team, a smoothly scrolling playfield that is, in reality, three screen wide, and true-



HOCKEY (THORN EVIL)
(Atari 5200)

to-life puck movement.

Hockey has no referees to call penalties, but it sure does have the kind of fights for which this sport is infamous. EG's latest saw one game degenerate into a five-minute brawl as both teams erupted into a corner and went at it hammer and tong.

The most unusual aspect of the cartridge is that up to four humans can play, but all of them will be on the same team against the computer-directed ride. This set-up adds a new perspective to video sports, since it puts a premium on inter-player cooperation that accurately reflects major league ice action.



THE ARK'S GUIDE TO
**ATARI
COMPUTER
SOFTWARE**

KIDEO:

Even Five-Year-Olds Get Videogame-mania!

By JOYCE WORLEY

Cllectronic gaming may be the hobby for all ages, but every game isn't necessarily ideal for every player. And though it is also frequently repeated that gaming is one of the few recreations that people of all ages can enjoy, some of the more complex adventure, strategy and even action-style contests may be unsuitable for five-to-12-year-olds.

Enter video — videogames and computer programs designed especially for the youngest arcadeurs. Most of these titles are easy even for a pre-literate to learn, some have educational overtones along with the entertainment, and all of them are specifically created to appeal to budding minds.

Perhaps ironically, most kideo games are bought by adults. The arcaders who pioneered with "Pong" in the early 1970's are now raising families of their own. When mom and pop are hankered down over their joysticks chasing through mazes or hopping on blocks, it's a safe bet that little Jason or Justine will be right there, peering avidly at the screen and waiting for their chance to have some fun. More and more parents who want a video challenge that won't frustrate a child or doesn't have as much on-screen carnage as the typical shoot-'em-up are buying video titles calculated to captivate the pre-teen set.

Software publishers are casting a covetous eye on this youth market these days. The result is a sudden influx of video titles. Let's boot up a few of the best

ones and see how they play . . .

Atari, in cooperation with the Children's Computer Workshop, has introduced a collection of games for three-to-seven-year-olds, plus a special controller with which to play the games designed especially for little kids. The Atari Kid's Controller measures about 6-in. by 8-in., and features a 12-button keypad that's easy for youngsters to use.

The controller sells separately for about \$19. Each game in the Atari Kid's Library comes with a colorful overlay for the keypad that makes game details and directions easier for

youngsters to understand.

The games, playable on the Atari 2600, feature Sesame Street characters. *Cookie Monster March* has 10 game levels to hone developing motor skills. The gamer guides an on-screen Cookie Kid through a simple maze, gathering goodies. Each collection must be taken to the cookie jar, when Cookie Monster appears to eat the cakes one by one. The first three levels of play don't even have a time limit, so the player can take as long as he needs to maneuver through the maze. Upper levels introduce timed games, a two-player variation, contests between computer-controlled Cookie Monster and the COOKIE Kid, and a Super Challenge game that features an invisible maze.

Big Bird's Egg Catch has a row of hens at the top of the screen, laying eggs that Big Bird must catch. They're easy to snare at the start, but as the child gets more confident, upper skill levels provide harder challenges.

Alpha Beam is for slightly older children. Using the Atari Kid's Controller, the gamer manipulates a small spaceship, retrieving letters and returning them to the main spacecraft.

Atari Fan Club games are more challenging contests, aimed at the seven to 11 pre-teen youth market. *Snoopy & The Red Baron* puts America's favorite mutt in the cockpit of his doghouse, doing battle in the skies with the Red Baron. When Snoopy manages to beat the Baron, instead of exploding, prizes fall from the plane. When the Red Baron shoots Snoopy's flying-doghouse from under him,





GAMES FOR THE YOUNGER SET



Atari 2600 \$19.95



Atari 2600 \$19.95



ColecoVision \$29.95

there's no crash. Instead, Snoopy and his house just sink slowly down to the ground. The animation is charming, with Snoopy, complete with flyer's goggles and WWI-style neck scarf, flying in his doghouse over varied terrain, in a blue sky that's enhanced with a few dangerous clouds to provide extra difficulty at the upper levels.

Another title in the Atari Fun Club library is *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, inspired by the Walt Disney movie, "Fantasia". The mousy-looking wizard stands under a sky filled with celestial splendors... star, lightning bolts, and varied targets that can be destroyed by just moving the wizard into contact with them as they fall, or by zapping them. If the young wizard moves off either edge of the screen, he enters a new screen filled with animated mops, straight from the movie sequence. The apprentice must stop the mops from getting past him, or they spill water all over the floor. The room gradually fills with water, until the little wizard hasn't a dry spot to stand on, which ends the game.

Little girls are certain to be charmed by *Strawberry Shortcake Musical Match-ups*, for the Atari 2600 from Parker Brothers. First the game shows each of the five Strawberryland characters, with their names. Then the game starts mixing up the characters

— the head of Strawberry Shortcake, with the body of Huckleberry Pie, and the feet of Purple Pieman, for example. The gamer has to correctly put together a Strawberryland character by changing the pieces until everything is right. When the picture is perfect, the character's name appears below him, and a new mixed-up person appears. The musical accompaniment

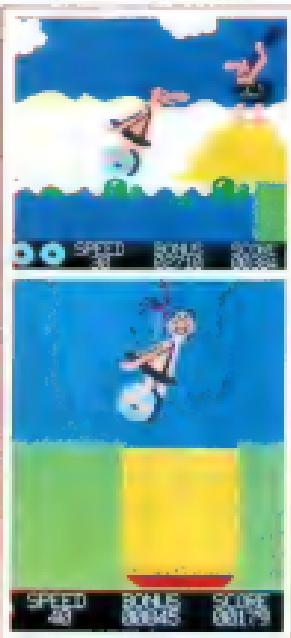
for the game is quite special. Not only does every character have his own theme, but when the mixed-up Strawberrylanders are on-screen, pushing the button produces a composite tune made up of a bit of each song for the characters included in the mixed person.

Colecovision owners have some excellent video games to choose from.



Atari 2600 \$29.95

Smurf Rescue in Gargamel's Castle lets the gamer control a Smurf on a rescue mission. First he leaves his Smurf-cottage, then travels through the forest, fields, and through dangerous mountain caverns until he finds the castle and rescues the Smurfette. The graphics are so good that they could almost be mistaken for Saturday morning cartoons. This is one game that's guaranteed to put a happy smile



© 1987 CIVILIAN FOR TELESYS INTERNAL COMPUTER

on the face of a young gamer. Best of all, it has more upper difficulty levels so that the entire family will enjoy playing it, too.

Sigma On-Line's Quest for Time for ColecoVision features Johnny Hart's "B.C." characters from the funny papers. Thor, the first man, travels across the countryside on his prehistoric unicycle, encountering Far Broad, Cute Chick, and other characters from the famous cartoon strip, in a 30-screen trip that covers day, dusk and nighttime sequences. The style of the cartoon is retained in the game, even to the silly grin on Thor's face each time he weeds his unicycle or crashes into a tree.

There are a lot of good computer



KIDEO

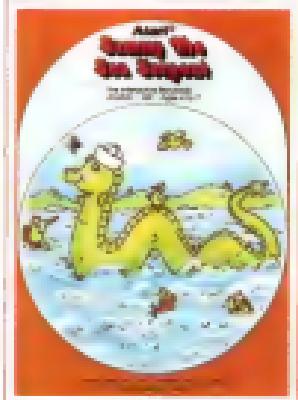
games for young arcade. One of the best for a new arcade is *Stickybear Bop*, for the Apple II (48K disk) from Xerox. The screen is filled with an animated shooting gallery, with three rows of targets. At the top are the smaller, harder-to-hit, higher-scoring goals, but the bottom row has large Stickybears that even the youngest player won't have trouble with.

The second game screen features Stickybear juggling three targets, but the gamer must hit each one at the top of its arc, making this much harder than the first level. Round three has Stickybear raining sandbags on the computerist. The game continues through six levels, with some of the cutest animation any kid has ever grown to love, and enough challenge at the upper levels to give even adults a run for their point total.

DesignWare's *Creature Creator* for the Apple II (48K disk) is another character-building game like Strawberry Shortcake, but with a difference. The gamer matches the computer-generated creature, selecting the correct heads, bodies, arms and legs from thousands of possible combinations. Then, simple programming instructions animate the creature, and it does a little dance. This diversion, recom-

mended for kids four to eight, not only is a lot of fun, but teaches a good lesson in the fundamentals of programming.

Microsohn's *Highrise* takes children's building blocks one step further than they've ever gone before, and requires the arcade to select blocks of various shapes and sizes, then pile them up. Every block added to the stack adds points, but misjudge the placement of a new piece, and the whole thing comes tumbling down. This is a whole-family game. Youngsters will have a ball balancing blocks,



SAMMY THE SEA SERPENT

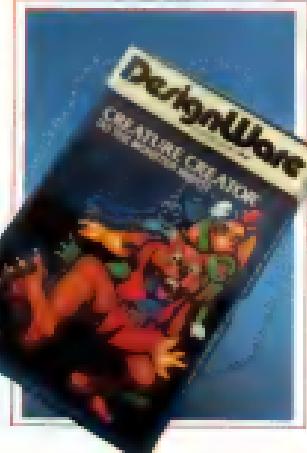
and older gamers will find more difficult challenges as the game progresses. There's a special Instructor Mode in the program that makes it easy to teach *Highrise* to new gamers.

A good video game for Atari computers, for the four to seven age group, is *Sammy the Sea Serpent*, from Program Design, Inc. It's a combination game and story, read to the child by the computer. The gamers move Sammy from one adventure to another with a joystick, as the story unfolds. The disk is two-sided, and side "B" contains two additional games based on the Sammy character.

Spinaker's *Alphabet Zoo* is for kids three to eight, playable on the Commodore 64. They race their on-screen egos (Tomatoe Head or Millie Mushroom) through a maze, chasing letters that spell the name of the animal pictured on-screen.

Kids take to electro-games like puppies to puddles. No matter what home system you have, there's certain to be some good choices.

Creature Creator (DesignWare)



New Products

THE ATARI 400: THE 64K LEAP

It's finally done gone and happened! Mosaic, one of the leading producers of upgrade boards for the Atari computer systems, has finally produced the desired 64K Select—for both 400 and 800 systems!

Using sophisticated bank-switching technology which "Test Lab" is taking up in much greater detail, the Select adorns come true for most Atarians. On the 800, three Select boards are plugged into the appropriate slots and, voilà! 196,608 bytes of usable RAM are sitting within that venerable casing.

It's bus-compatible with the 168 and/or 252 Atarian RAM boards.



MOSAIC 564K RAM SELECT

Owners will soon be getting in on a newsletter discussing ways to best utilize this memory usage. There's even a program library. Wanna know more? Thought you might. Write: Mosaic Electronics, Inc., P.O. Box 708, Oregon City, OR 97045.

How soon, we wonder, before memory or even microcomputers enter the range of the virtually limitless? It's a fairly safe bet that, barring holocaust, the next generation will have access to home computers that make the current Pentagon big-byters look like hand-held calculators.

THE KOALAPAD TOUCH TABLET

Koala Technologies/Under \$125

Graphics tablets have been staples of game design and programming for years but only recently has technology made them accessible to individual computers. This reasonably priced tablet for



KOALAPAD TOUCH TABLET

the Apple II is scheduled for release from Koala Technologies. The "Koalapad" is a touch tablet that comes with applicable software, making it suitable for novices at the art of computer graphics.

The tablet fits easily on either a drawing surface or the lap, is small and lightweight—good even for young children—but sturdy constructed.

NEC PC-8200

NEC Home Electronics/1799

The PC-8200, a new computer hardware-software package, has been announced by NEC. The PC-8200 is a portable, battery-operated computer complete with a trio of built-in software packages:



NEC PC-8200 hard at work

ages, text editing, TELCOM telecommunications and Microsoft BASIC.

The entire package will also include a font formatter, investment portfolio, loan evaluator, appointment scheduler, bar code reader, memory calculator, bank switch utility, mode selector and several music and game programs.

The 8-bit PC-8200 comes with 16K bytes of CMOS RAM (expandable to 64K) and an extra 32K RAM disk cartridge. It offers an 8-line, 40-character LCD display with upper and lower case, graphic characters and special symbols, and an optional CRT adapter allowing users full-screen monitor capability, and provides standard floppy disk and cassette ports, with an optional floppy disk drive interface adapter soon to be available.

MAIEWARPS

By Vladimir Kozakian/Published by Clarkson N. Potter, Inc./\$2.50

Okay, boys and girls, are you ready for the first "videogame in book form"? I hope! Too bad, because it's already here. Now what, you may wonder, is a videogame book? Good question, Holmes. Actually, it's a collection of paper images with "comic" themes and purple prose that, in spite of everything, combine to present a rather challenging and intriguing paper chase. If you enjoy videogames but hate puzzles, don't expect to be won over. But puzzlepeople and videogame hybrids will probably find Kozakian's concept amazing.



MAIEWARPS

3200 ADAPTOR

Atari/for use with the 5200

Atari has finally produced its long-awaited 3200 adaptor for use with its 5200 programmable third-wave system. Although not compatible with all 5200s (see the back of the box before purchasing), this cartridge adaptor is made of durable black plastic and inserts directly into the 5200 cartridge slot.



VCS CARTRIDGE ADAPTOR (ATARI)

By TRACIE FORMAN

IN CONTROL

A Close Look at New Controllers

SUPER ACTION CONTROLLERS

Coleco/Colecovision

After almost a year of advance bally-hoo, Coleco has released its Super Action Controllers in September '83. Packaged two to a box with a good-looking baseball cartridge — and in-

The question: Are the Super Action Controllers all they're cracked up to be?

Sports game fans are sure to think so. These controllers add a degree of subtlety impossible to achieve with a joystick/two-button combination.

Yet the Super Action Controllers

cause they squeezed the base too tightly, it really depends on which cartridge is in the slot. (The speed roller, which hinders the movement of on-screen characters, seems to have no effect on non-sports games.)

The controller's ball-topped joystick is more ball than stick, a nice change from the old flat doorknob style. Although this one takes some getting used to, especially for diagonal movement.

The hard plastic bottom of the controllers slopes down slightly just where



COURTESY OF COLECO/SUPER ACTION CONTROLLER

corporating joystick, keypad, speed roller and four action buttons — the Super Action Controllers look like a double threat.

They work with any Colecovision cartridge, but are especially suited to sports-oriented games like Baseball, Rocky Battles the Champ, and Football. The games themselves will be reviewed in "Programmable Parade", so let's get down to the business at hand.

aren't nearly as good at all-around game play. They work well on some games, but make others almost impossible. The main factor is the placement of the action buttons, located just where the players' hands grip the pistol-style stick. In games like Ladybug — where there are no button functions — the stick performs reasonably well. But Venture lovers may inadvertently shoot dead monsters, be-



SUPER ACTION BASEBALL (COLECOVISION)

it meets the lower thumb joint. After only two games of Venture, the reviewer had to take a break due to cramping! This seemed to happen on the more strenuous games.

Whether or not Colecovision owners should buy these controllers is really a matter of personal choice. Instead of regarding them as full-time replacement sticks, think of them as specialty items, like the driving module, only for sports games. Anyone interested in the three specially-designed cartridges should definitely take home the Super Action Controllers, while stop-on-a-dime action fans should check them out carefully — with a hands-on trial — before committing any cash.

GROW WITH US!



A special message
for electronic games retailers

Playing electronic games is now America's fastest-growing hobby. Here are some facts:

- More than 10 million quarters are dropped into current coin-op champ "Tetris" every single day.
- Nearly 5 million programmable videogame systems are hooked up to U.S. TVs already. Four million more are expected to be sold this year alone, along with 30 million game cartridges to play on them.
- Sales of computer games are expected to exceed 1 million units by the end of the year.

ELECTRONIC GAMES—the first—and only—magazine devoted to this booming field, is growing as fast as the high-tech hobby it covers. Our premier issue was a record-breaking phenomenon, with many dealers reporting sell-outs. Our second issue promises more of the same.

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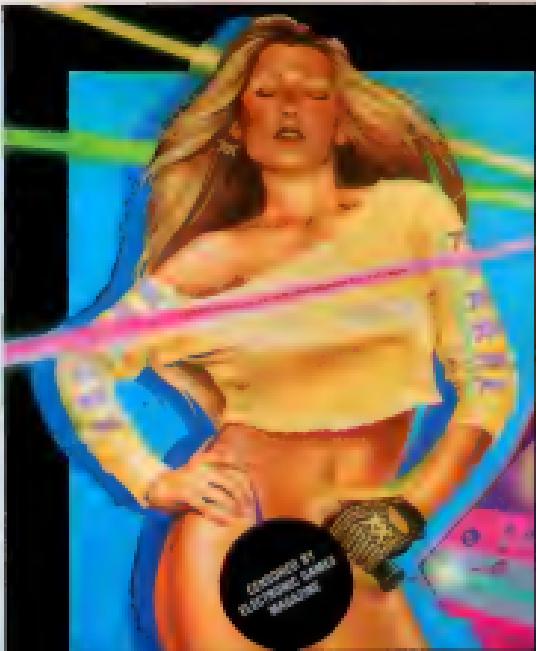
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THE COMPETITION PRO

ColecoVision/Atari-, ColecoVision- and TI 99/4A-compatible

This lightweight, two-button joystick features a square black base on which is mounted a sturdy black ball-tipped stick. In the Atari and TI versions, both buttons have the same function, adapting easily for right- or left-handed players. The ColecoVision model allows for two separate button functions.

Both the TI- and ColecoVision-compatible sticks are actually standard Atari models, with a plug-in adapter attached. (The adapter can be used on other joysticks as well.) Unfortunately, The Competition Pro doesn't adapt well to two-button play in its ColecoVision incarnation. It's almost impossible to play a game like *Cosmic Avenger*, holding the joystick and pressing both fire buttons, without being a contortionist.

In one-button games, however, The Competition Pro plays well, providing satisfying control and comfort. It has a slightly sensitive touch, which makes it difficult to use in maze games, where tight turns are par for the course. Still, it's a good all-around game player, and with its well-reinforced joystick base, it's especially durable as well.

THE PROSTICK III

Newport Controls

ColecoVision-compatible

Newport Controls has established a reputation for building quality joysticks, and its Prostick III adds yet another feather to the company's cap.

The Prostick III is Newport's ColecoVision adaptation of The Prostick II for the Atari. Like its predecessor, the joystick's base is squared off, widening towards the back, and the action button is located at the front of the base. A small, ball-tipped joystick can



PROSTICK III (NEWPORT CONTROLS)

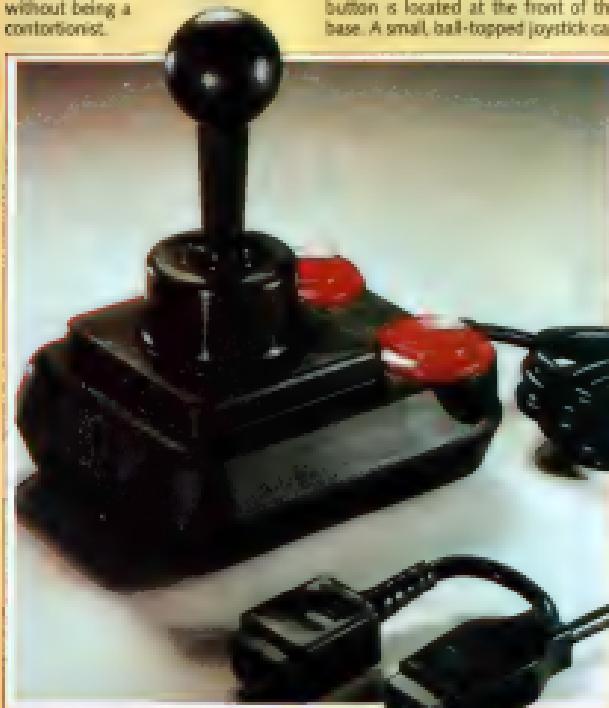
be adapted from a standard eight-direction stick to a four-way control (great for maze games) by adjusting the gateplate at the base of the stick.

The single button, also known as the Tri-Fire bar, is pressed to use either of two button functions. Each side of the bar functions as a separate button, so that different effects are made possible from pressing the right or left side, while pressing the middle of the bar sets off both button functions at the same time.

The Prostick III comes with an attached Y-adapter. This allows the joystick to be plugged into the same port as the ColecoVision keypad, eliminating the need to keep plugging and unplugging joysticks to reset the game or choose a new option.

With its tasteful good looks — basic black with gold fire-bar — plus the built-in adapter, switchable gateplate and sturdy construction, the Prostick III is a welcome addition to any ColecoVision gamer's armory.

Also, because it is sturdy-built, easy to use and versatile, the Prostick III plays well with almost any ColecoVision cartridge.



TRU COMPETITION PRO (TRU)



Climb to the Top of Crisis Mountain!

By RICK TEVERBAUGH

months there has been a lot of courting of software authors. From January to May of this year I made a lot of long distance telephone calls," he relates. "When I finished Dino Eggs I sent it to the six companies I had decided on. Stan Goldberg at Micro Lab wanted to add Crisis Mountain to his catalog along with Dino Eggs even though the big splash for Crisis Mountain was over. That impressed me."

Creative Software is handling the Crisis Mountain conversion for the



A Screenshot from Crisis Mountain.

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David Schroeder is a Johnny-come-lately to the business of computer gaming. "It was about two years ago that I started reading computer magazines," he says matter-of-factly.

Yet what he has accomplished in that short period is enough to earn a spot in the upper tier of game authors. His initial work to hit the marketplace was Crisis Mountain for Syntagtic, and "hit" is probably the right word.

The game, which pits the gamer against time, boulders, lava pits and the rugged terrain of the caves inside the mountain, has sold 5,000 copies in the Apple version and 1,000 in the Atari.

Crisis Mountain is now in the hands of the folks at Micro Lab, which is also the home of his latest creation, Dino Eggs. "In the past nine

DAVID SCHROEDER WITH CREATIONS



(C) 1985 DAVID SCHROEDER

VIC-20, Commodore 64, TI-99 and Texas Instruments' machines.

The entire gaming philosophy of Schroeder comes from his childhood gaming experiences, plus his impression of one classic, magical arcade game.

"I still find that my best friends are the ones who will play games with me," says the Seattle resident. "I've also always liked to change the rules of the game as I went along. I started creating board games when I was in the fifth and sixth grades. I had one tedious game about the Federal government, but it was too complex for many people to enjoy it."

I also had a fondness for creating miniature golf courses out of popsicle sticks or whatever. I like manipulating the difficulty of the chal-



CRISIS MOUNTAIN (ACADEO/PUNK)

lence and I've always found it intriguing to arrange things in space."

Schroeder took two programming-oriented classes, an introduction to computers and artificial intelligence, during his four years at Yale. "At that time there wasn't any such thing as microcomputers," states Schroeder. "At that time a career in computers meant either working in business applications or as an engineer."

"Then I started getting interested in microcomputers and going to user group meetings to find out exactly what could be done with these new machines. In November of 1981, I started working at the community college in Seattle."

His selection of the Apple as the machine he would create upon was "pretty much by chance," he relates. "It was the machine they had at the college."

His inspiration concerning the direction of his work on the computer came from the inspiration he got at the arcades. "I had been informally following the games in the arcades for

Travel Back in Time to Save Dinosaurs from Extinction!



DINO EGGS (ACADEO/TURB)

quite some time, but it was Donkey Kong that really raised my eyebrows. I found a fascination in just watching other people play the game. I think I felt an empathy with the on-screen character that I didn't find in other games. The others didn't personalize the game and didn't draw sympathy. So I figured if you could create a human figure on a computer screen, you were ahead of the field."

"In the beginning I just wanted to get Donkey Kong on the screen. I had no idea I could create anything on the Apple that would be of great interest to many people. Eventually I came around to the idea of putting some of my own ideas into the project, like the time clocks on the bombs and the randomness of objects on the screen. It



CRISIS MOUNTAIN (ACADEO/PUNK)

was then that Crisis Mountain began to take shape. I was really quite proud of the way it turned out."

Proud enough to turn his attentions to his next creation. Yet why turn to baby dinosaurs? "I've always been fascinated with realistic simulations of what could be actual situations. I also like the feeling of the prehistoric world and the opportunity it gives me to arrange the architecture of scenes," says Schroeder.

In Dino Eggs, the gamer goes back through a time warp to prehistoric times, but he is carrying a strain of measles, which is harmless to the time traveler, but deadly to the dinosaurs. Since the gamer feels so badly about the plague he has unleashed, he tries to transport as many of the unhatched dino eggs into the future so the race of mammals can be saved.

Things aren't all that easy though, as some frightening monsters roam the world, including a real scary momma dinosaur whose eggs gamers try to transport. Building a fire will keep her away, but if the fire goes out, the gamer could end up mashed beneath her mammoth feet.

Even though the gamer is basically trying to save the mother's babies, Schroeder points out, "Dinosaurs are famous for not being able to see the big picture."

Although the eggs and unendangered dinosaurs may ultimately reach the future, what will be done with them? "That's the idea I'm kicking around right now as a sequel to Dino Eggs," says Schroeder. "I also have five or six strong ideas of adaptations for already existing games as well as some more abstract ideas for things completely original."

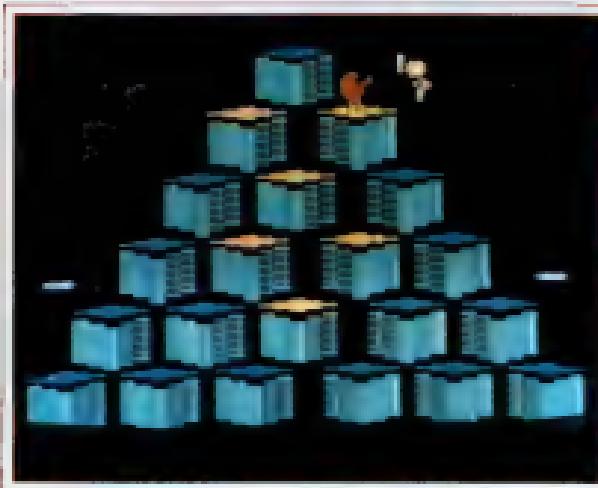
If Dino Eggs and Crisis Mountain are any indication of the quality of his future work, David Schroeder could find his name well up on the list of best-selling software authors. ☐



DAVID SCHROEDER AT PLAY

PROGRAMMABLE PARADE

Get Hopping with Q*bert!



Q*BERT © PARKER BROTHERS

Q*BERT

Parker Brothers/Atari 2600

Almost certainly the most eagerly-awaited home translation of the year, Parker's Q*bert for the Atari 2600 is, at first glance, a little disappointing. The sharply defined cube-blocks so memorable from the coin-op, for example, are replaced by decidedly stair-step quality visuals. The accompanying soundtrack is also something less than a note-for-note reproduction of the arcade version's enchanting audio.

But sit down a minute. Give it a chance. Actually play the game and it comes much closer to its source of inspiration than a surface evaluation indicates. Old Q*bert himself is a virtual duplicate of his coin-op big brother, and his usual gang of adver-

saries, otherwise known as Colly & Co., are faithfully reproduced, with all on-screen movement and color changing coming off impressively well.

Ah, but as you know, the motto of BG is: "the play's the thing!" and Q*bert has play value coming out his snorkel. Now is definitely the time for all those hoses out there who couldn't get old Q*bert to do anything but leap, screaming pitifully, into the abyss, to actually sit down and learn how to play this game. To jump down the left side, pull the joystick toward you. To have him leap down the right side, move the stick to the right. There's reason behind all this, of course, but it totally eludes this reviewer.

Never to mind, though, because

once you actually get the hang of this thing, it becomes amusing beyond words. Or, as Q*bert himself might muse: "&*&*&*&"

The best part of the tip, though, is definitely the floating disks located near the base of the pyramid. In times of trouble — or when looking for a change of scene — leap onto one of the two flanking disks and get a free ride to the top of the playfield!

So overcome the initial reaction of "but it doesn't look like Q*bert!" and give this piece of software a chance. It'll grow on you.

(WW Richardson)

REVENGE OF THE BEEFSTEAK TOMATOES

For Video Games/Atari 2600

If you've ever groaned through that classic bad movie, "Attack of the Beefsteak Tomatoes", you may be surprised to learn that there's actually a sequel. Before you head for your favorite drive-in or dollar movie house, though, the good news is that this time the feocious fruit is on display in a videogame instead of on the silver screen. *Revenge of the Beefsteak Tomatoes*. (Revenge against what? Maybe reviewers of the movie. . . .)

Designed by John Russell, *Revenge of the Beefsteak Tomatoes* is played by one person using the left joystick controller. Manipulate the joystick to direct an all-purpose tomato sprayer around the screen in an attempt to capture and release the bricks that scroll back and forth across the top, and also to destroy tomatoes and tomato plants for higher point totals.

The game automatically begins on level 6, but players can choose different play levels by pressing the game select lever before commencing. The current level of play, along with the

PROGRAMMABLE PARADE



score, is displayed prominently at the top of the screen. Red bars in the bottom left-hand corner symbolize the number of remaining tomato sprayers. (Note: If left difficulty switch is in "B" position, three bars will always be displayed.)

The play-mechanic is straight-forward. Trap bricks that periodically sail back and forth across the top of the playfield.

Keeping in mind that a wall cannot be completed if the ones beneath it aren't already done, the best strategy involves building from the bottom up. Since the bottom wall should be entirely made of green bricks, waiting for the appropriately-colored bricks to zip across the screen would be most logical. After the bottom wall (green) is complete, move on to building the middle level (pink) and finally, the top level (gold).

Upon spotting a likely-looking target, just shoot the sprayer directly at it with one good shot. A "beep" will



Screenshot of the resource management screen.

sound when a brick is hit, indicating whether the gamer's in a position to then spray it downward, for multi-building purposes. When the beep, it can be placed in a wall space by aiming the tomato sprayer toward the desired

position in the wall and pushing the joystick fire-button once.

The sprayer can shoot beneath or above the wall, but it's impossible to place a brick by firing horizontally. You also cannot drop a brick to form a wall through an existing wall. You must guide the tomato sprayer through openings in the upper walls to reach the remaining crevices below.

After the player has completed all the walls, this cute brick-builder program starts all over again, taking the player to the next most difficult level of action. Among the extra complications: More of those perky flying tomatoes whiz across the screen and make it harder to keep protecting the tender young plants.

As with its celebrated *MegaForce*, Fox has again turned the trick of adapting a dumb movie into an enjoyable game.

(Lisa Honore)

MOONSWEeper

Imagine/Adam 2600

While not quite enough of a visual knockout to make it a classic, *Imagine's* new 2600 cartridge, *Moonsweeper*, features an entirely unique concept, several play innovations and enough action for any three typical science fiction videogames.

The gamer guides a horizontally moveable craft across the base of the playfield. At top screen-center sits the sun. The ship is flying in locked orbit around the solar orb (though no motion is perceived by the player). From all directions come multi-colored moons and a collection of deadly space floasam. The object is to land your ship on one of the moons—they come in four colors, their color determining their difficulty values—while avoiding the fiery cinders and other cosmic debris assailing the play craft. It is possible to form an impenetrable barrier around your ship by hitting the action button



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Zaxxon has all the unique color graphics, super sound and unprecedented 3-dimensional effects that made it the star of the arcade.

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PROGRAMMABLE PARADE



and pulling back on the joystick, while more aggressive gamers may want to score points by blowing up the fiery, orbiting space junk. Using the shield-barrier does drain points from a player's score faster than Luke Skywalker can obliterate tie-fighters, but then at game's sweet dawning, the gamer has no points to lose. Or, as Bob Dylan once wrote, "when you ain't got nothing, you ain't got nothing" to

straight up, while a launch to the left or right will send the projectile veering off in that direction. This, however, is for inter-atmospheric battle. To hit the launchers or satellites that hover above the protective layer near the surface, pull back on the stick and fire, sending a photon torpedo right into their high-flying breadbaskets.

But this isn't just a recreation composed merely of blowing things into



MOONSWAPPER (IMAGIC)

lose." So throw up that forcefield, but remember, the barrier lets moons as easily as space cinders — also a danger to trigger-happy raster blasters, of course.

Once an arceder makes contact with a moon, the docking phase is inaugurated and the ship is immediately transported — moving at high speeds — to the orbiting body's surface. The surface of these moons — ranging in danger in accord with their hue — is composed of towering, "recognize" look-alikes, which must be blasted, lest they fire deadly missiles; "launcher" ships which must be instantly incinerated, or they'll spawn a mini-flock of deadly micro-attack vehicles; and the big satellite, which poses no threat, but, as it is an alienoid, may be destroyed for big bonus points. Hitting the action button sends a missile

tiny, little pieces. Ah, no, there is a decidedly humanistic bent here as well. The real object is to fly over and pick up stranded space miners, who stand waving their arms to let you know they're friendly. Pick up six miners and hold course and you're in for a treat: a sequence of "launcher spheres" outlined up. Each disc passed through increases your ship's speed until the sixth allows it to reach escape velocity and depart that moon, mission — temporarily — accomplished.

A whirling radar device signals the next position from which a miner will appear on the horizon line.

Again, the graphics just aren't stupendous. But once the ship is moving at full tilt, you play adenalin should really start to boogie.

The only question is: Are gamers burnt out on science fiction game

themes? Imagic has released a steady stream of SF titles, but the interest may no longer be as ardent for this type of SF invasion game on the 2600 system. If arceders still have any hotz at all left for space gaming, *Moonswapper* should definitely be checked out.

(WWT Richardson)

KEN USTON BLACKJACK/POKER

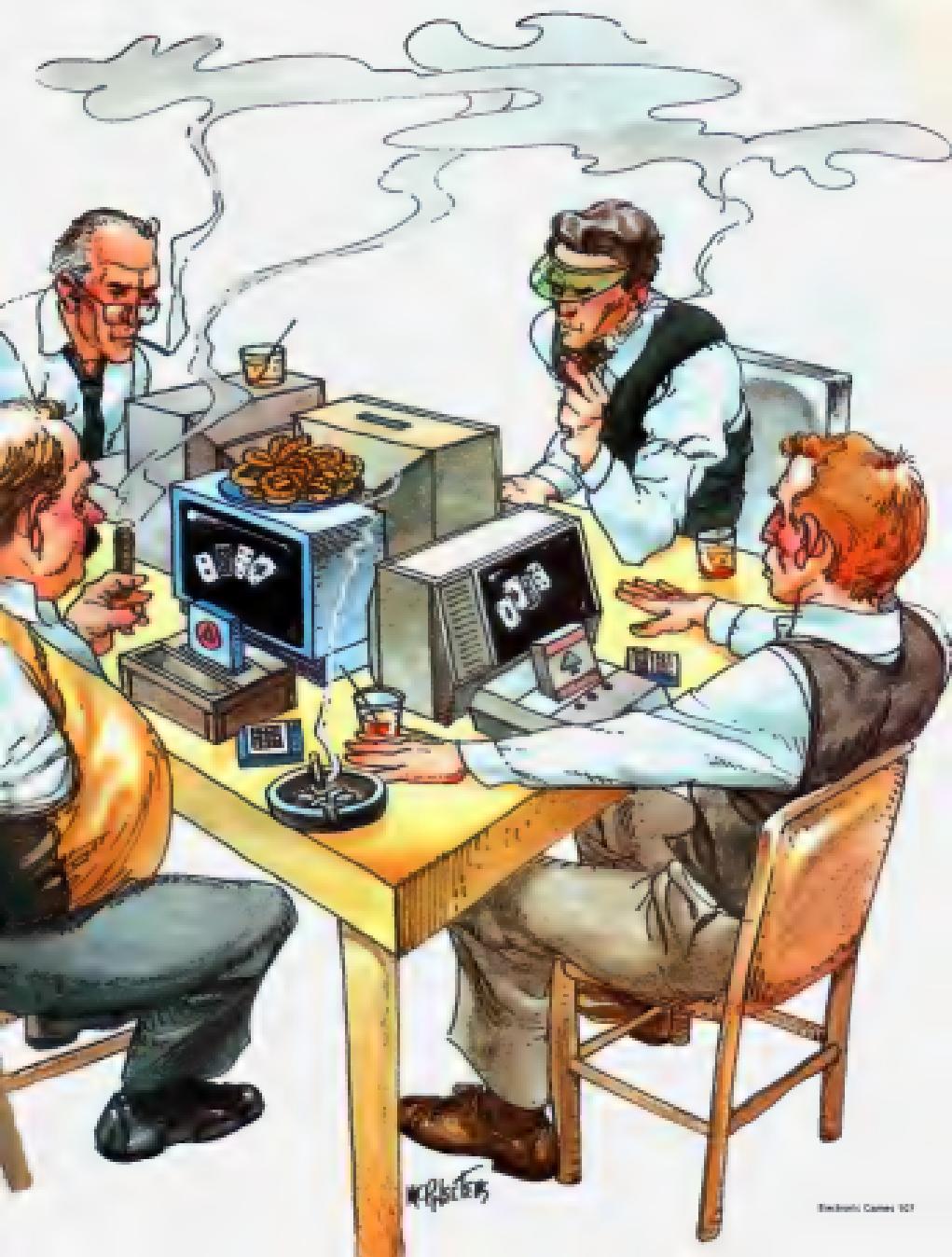
Coleco/Colecovision

Here at last is the seemingly inevitable blackjack/poker cartridge for the Colecovision. It's an "Unwritten Law of the Electronic Gaming World" that there must be a card game program for every videogame and computer system on the market. And now there's finally one for the most popular "third wave" programmable.

It's a good one, too. One to four players compete against the dealer ("the house", as it were) in either blackjack or five-card stud. A special overlay, held in a recess in the cartridge between games, fits over the keypad portion of the standard Colecovision controller. All instructions, whether involving betting or the deal (in blackjack), are entered using the pad.

The blackjack portion of the cartridge is really well-designed and sports just about every option a dedicated player of "21" could possibly want. You can get insurance if the dealer shows an ace, double down, split and all the other moves possible in Las Vegas or Atlantic City. The program even gives the humans a little extra edge in that it pays off on a so-called "five-card Charlie", something you won't find in many actual casinos.

The poker game is also well-done though there's nothing particularly remarkable about it. It's just good, solid five-card stud.



PROFESSIONAL GAME

BY JEFFREY L. HARRIS

and no players on the planet who have more than 10 years of experience may enter. The contest is limited to amateur players, so it's open to everyone. Using the Internet, players from every part of the globe can compete against each other in a variety of games. The contests will differ by category, but there is always a limit to the number of entries per game. The games are free, so there are no fees or costs involved.

The first step in finding the best game is to look at the rules of the game you want to play. You can find many different types of games online, so it's important to know what you're looking for. Once you've found a game you like, you can start playing. You can play alone or with others, and you can even play against other players from around the world. You can also play against AI opponents, which can be a great way to practice your skills. There are many different ways to play, so it's up to you to find the one that works best for you.



Illustration: Jeff Harris

now. In most cases, the best way to approach the contest is to register online. This is the easiest way to participate in a professional game, and it's also the most efficient way to compete. You can register online through the game's website, or you can register through a third-party service like GameFest.

Once you've registered, you'll need to choose a game to play. There are many different types of games available, so it's important to choose one that suits your interests. You can play solo or with others, and you can even play against other players from around the world. You can also play against AI opponents, which can be a great way to practice your skills. There are many different ways to play, so it's up to you to find the one that works best for you.

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GOALS

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INSERT COIN HERE

Gyruss Calls from Deepest Space!

By TRACIE FORMAN

GYRUSS

Centuri

The year 1980 showed a trend back to the basics in arcade gaming. While manufacturers are still scrambling to reach new heights (or depths) in "cute"-style games, nobody is about to abandon one of videogaming's most successful genres: the shoot-out in space.

Joining the current wave of space games which includes: Sega's Star Trek, Williams' Sinistar and Atari's Star Wars is Gyruss, Centuri's action-packed space saga that's been gobbling quarters faster than Pac-Man munches power pills. With its striking, vividly-colored graphics and toe-tapping rock backbeat, it's no wonder Gyruss is attracting so much attention.

After dropping in the requisite coins, the gamer takes control of a spacefaring shuttle bound for the outermost planets of the solar system. Between each planet lies a fleet of enemy fighter ships bent on keeping the neighborhood free of human invaders.

The aliens lie in wait, frustratingly out of weapons' reach, in the center of a circular playfield. Periodically, a squadron breaks off from the fleet and attacks the ship, which is confined to the outer perimeter of the circle. The enemy squad attacks in a snaking, single-file column, growing larger as it nears the intended target — you!



CENTURI

Gamers have to clear the screen by maneuvering the ship around the outside edge of the circle, where it's confined in a permanent orbit. The ship always flies in toward the center of the circle, no matter which position it's in. Normally, the spaceship fires from a single gun port, located at the ship's nose.

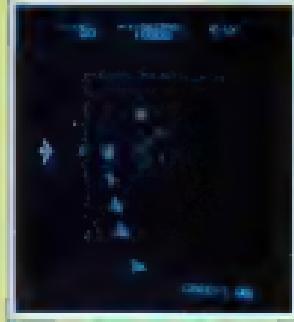
There are three kinds of enemies. Spaceships appear in the center of the screen and rush toward the outer edges, while meteors make their first showing at the outer edges of the screen, then get caught in the center orbit. Once inside the magic circle, the meteors change into glowing, three-pronged Warp Satellites. Blasting down the Warp Satellites earns the player a second laser gun, which doubles the ship's firepower and lasts through the life of the craft.

All the objects on a given playscreen must be destroyed to go on to the next level. The gamer's ship can be eliminated by colliding with an enemy target, or by being on the receiving end of a missile blast. Since enemy spaceships tend to "home in" on players who sit in one spot too long, the old hit-and-run strategy works well in this game.

After clearing the requisite number of screens (depending on the level of play), the screen shifts, the ship warps into overtime, and the spacefaring aracker arrives at his or her destination planet (clear 2 screens to reach Nept-

tune, then 3 to make it to Uranus, etc.). Now's the time for a well-earned reward: the Chance Stage.

Like Ladybug's special vegetable harvest, the Chance Stage is Gynx's reward to the player for a job well done. The object of the round is to score as many points as possible by destroying enemy formations as they fly past. The arcade's ship is totally invulnerable to destruction during the Chance Stage, so gamers need not worry about trivialities like dodging missile fire. Just blast those creeps!



Points are awarded on the basis of how many formations were sent to meet their makers. Eliminating all four enemy squadrons earns a special bonus.

After the Chance Stage, the gamer is sent out on his or her next mission: to reach a planet even farther away and more heavily guarded.

While its play mechanic is extremely simple, Gynx is one of the most playable games around. Its graphics are both beautiful and simple, while more than one arcade has been spotted swaying to the rhythm of the rock 'n' roll beat. Anyone who likes good, clean shoot-'em-ups, excellent sound, and a decent reward for expert-level play should find Gynx well worth the token.

MAPPY

Galaxysoft

Compo sound effects have come a long way since the "beep", "boop" and "blip" days. Sophisticated voice synthesis and pulse-pounding beats are just a few of the audio delights being offered to arcares these days, and arcade sound technology shows no signs of slowing down.

Like Gynx, the first thing many videogame buffs notice about Mappy

Mappy Puts The Cuffs on Cat-Burglars!

is its great sound effects. The music in this cat-and-mouse chase caper is provided by a rollicking, jazzy banjo tune that sets the mood for the Keystone Kop-like efforts of Mappy, the police mouse and one-man vigilante squad.

Our fuzzy hero has discovered the secret hideout of a claudically band of cat-burglars. The ferocious felines have recently robbed the neighborhood blind of such valuables as TV sets, radios, paintings...even personal computer! (Computers?) These cats have no mercy! If Mappy can gather up all the booty, he'll have enough evidence to put the ferocious footpads behind bars for good.



The thieves' den is actually an innocent-looking Victorian townhouse, six stories high and chock full of contraband. All the stairways have been removed, so the only way to get from one floor to another is to jump off the edge of a floor, bounce off the trampoline conveniently located at the bottom of each drop, then use the momentum to gain entry to the next floor. Players even control Mappy's motions while he's airborne, so that he can land to either the right or the left of the gap in the floor.

The cantankerous kitten is always in hot pursuit as Mappy winds his way along the playfield. Their ringleader—a huge red tomcat with a Marm's-like pout— even goes so far as to couch



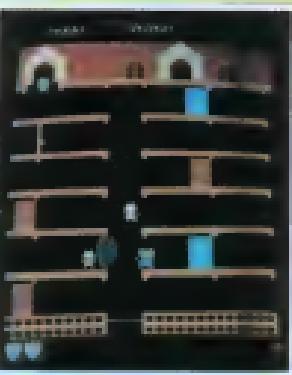
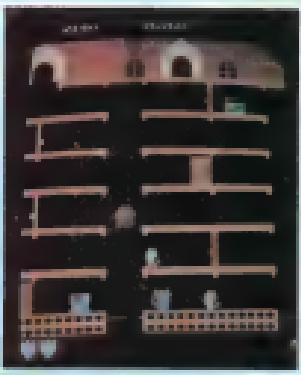
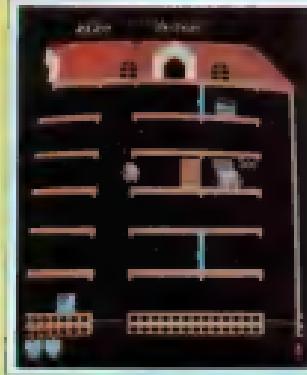
behind treasures, hoping to catch the fury flatfoot unaware. If touched by a cat, Mappy loses one life.

Getting carried away by the high-jumping trampoline act can also prove fatal if the macho mouse bangs his head on the ceiling (while cats can move freely through the rooftop attic, the place is off-limits to mice).

Fortunately, Mappy is smart



MAPPY (ALADDIN)



The mouse in Bally Midway's *Mappy* has his hands full trying to catch a den of cat burglars.

INSERT COIN HERE!

enough to make use of the doors scattered across each level. To open or close a portal, the mighty mite must face the door and push the appropriate button. Slamming the door on a cat burglar slams the mouse temporarily, and bars its way until the door is reopened.

Doors that flash are energized,

meaning that each time Mappy opens one, a huge blast of energy is unleashed upon his pursuers, blowing them off the screen in a huge gust of wind. Each time a cat blows off-screen, the arcade is awarded bonus points. Energized doors are the only real "weapon" the unarmed police mouse has for self-defense... besides his wits, of course.

The only place Mappy is truly safe from the claws of his enemies is while bouncing on the trampoline. Who can catch an airborne mouse?

After grabbing two screens' worth of merchandise, araders are rewarded with a bonus round. In this

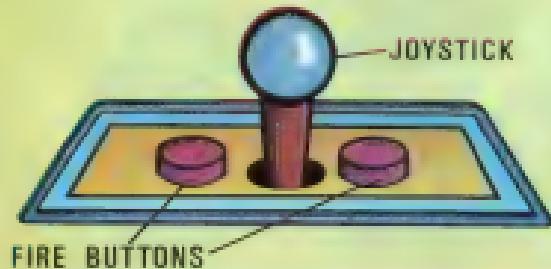
phase, Mappy has to jump from one trampoline to another, popping the balloons that float at the top of the screen. The more balloons popped before the music (and time) runs out, the higher the bonus score. If he's fast enough to make it, Mappy has the satisfaction of popping the final balloon, which bears an uncanny resemblance to the Head Cat himself.

Mappy is undoubtedly among the cutest of the "cute" games. Well-animated, hi-res graphics, an easy-to-learn, hard-to-master play mechanic, and some of the hottest music ever heard from a videogame, combine to make this one a winner! ☺

GYRUSS HOW IT PLAYS:

After selecting either a one- or two-player option, use the joystick to move your ship to the left or right around the circumference of the disk.

Press the fire button to release a burst of missile fire at the enemies.

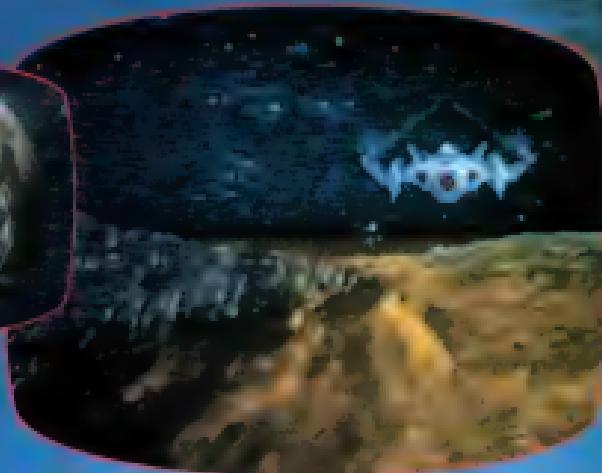


MAPPY HOW IT PLAYS:

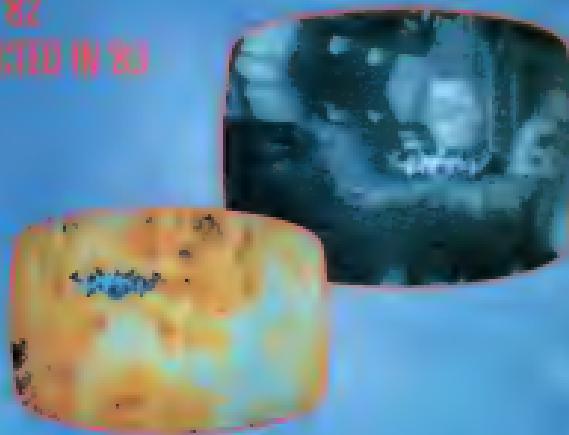
After selecting either a one- or two-player variation, use the joystick to move Mappy along the floor of the house. He's immune to falls, so run him off the edge of the floor to bounce off the trampoline and on to another level. While airborne, players can move Mappy to the left or right side of the gap by pressing the joystick appropriately.

Press the fire button to slam or open doors. Mappy must be facing the door in order to slam it.

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STRATEGY SESSION

Throw Looping for a Loop

By FRANK TETRO JR.

LOOPING

Coleco/CoscoVision

Looping pits you, an ace pilot, against deadly hot air balloons, acid drops, bounding balls and other devious devices as you attempt to reach "The End".

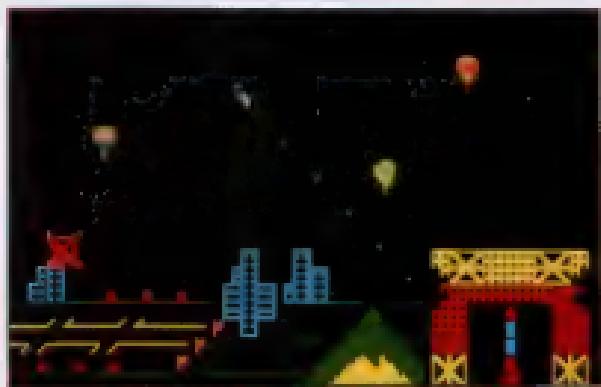
Shooting the rockets will open the gate which leads into the maze of pipes. Once through, your plane must avoid the drops which fall from two spigots in the roof. Next up is the twinkle room where little twinkler monsters move around in an attempt to run the plane out of the air.

Lastly, you enter the goal room where "The End" is guarded by four balls which bounce around and must be shot out in order to win. Once the game starts and you're airborne, keep the loops coming. That is, never fly in a straight line for long periods of time. The more you loop, the less chance the balloons have of homing in on your plane.

Keep flying constantly in case a balloon shoots up right in front of you. When you destroy the rocket, which

can be done with one shot, the gate will open and you can enter the maze. Once in the maze, always fly slow and straight. All the turns which must be made in the maze require a 90° turn. If you over or undershoot, you will have just one second to straighten out, or

else hit a wall. When the last turn is made, the two spigots will appear. Fly straight toward the next room; if a drop forms in the spigot above your plane, simply hit the gas and speed out from under it. Flying slowly in an attempt to shoot the drops as they fall



LOOPING ©COLECO

won't work. They fall too fast to be shot accurately.

Once your plane enters the bank's room, just head for the exit with your finger on that trigger button firing constantly. If a monster sneaks up under you, there's not much you can do except speed up because the room is too small to "loop" free of danger.

As you hit the entrance to the goal room, make an immediate strafing run for the center entrance, firing constantly. Once there turn directly at "The End" symbol and fly straight into it, firing constantly. Trying to destroy all the bats is foolish, for they're moving too fast, and if you miss the entrance, your plane will inevitably crash since the room is too small to loop in.

Looping is a game of precise control and constant firing. It won't be mastered after one sitting, but after a little practice you'll be the "Red Baron" of the looping world!!!!

KEYSTONE KAPERS

Activation/Atari 2600

In Keystone Kapers you play Keystone Kelly, that fearless constable who rid the world of all evil. But alas, Harry Hooligan has a different idea. It seems Harry wants to rob Southwicks Supermarket, and it is up to you to stop him!

The idea of Keystone is to catch Harry as soon as possible to earn the maximum number of bonus points. The longer you take, the less points Kelly will receive, and if the bonus counter reaches zero, Harry will escape. Kelly's job is to catch Harry while avoiding shopping carts, bouncing balls, toy airplanes, radios and other items. Should Harry reach the hazardous top floor and run off it, he

Catch the Con In Keystone Kapers and Cop Prizes Along the Way!



will pull a Houdini act and escape.

The main strategy behind Keystone Kapers is to keep moving and watch for obstacles. When jumping over an obstacle, don't stop to jump. Instead, keep running at the object, and push the button when you are about Yinch in front of it. This way you have a better chance of clearing it.

Once the biplanes appear, things get trickier because now you have to duck. Duck early if need be and don't let go of that stick until the plane is completely past you or your head will pop up right into the rear of the plane (which spells death for our hero.)

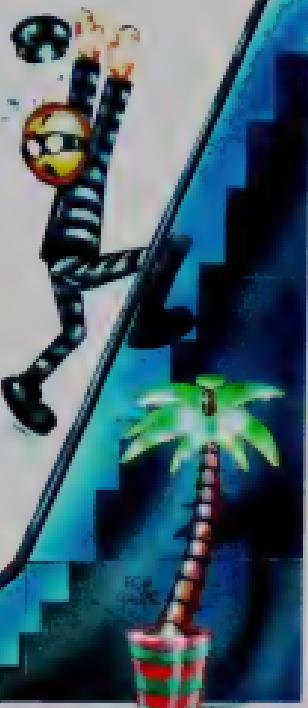
Most of all, if you miss the elevator, it may look faster to run to the escalator all the way on the left, and then run across the second level. This is not true, however, and this is also the only

time I recommend that you wait around. No matter how far away the elevator is, it will always be faster than taking the escalator.

When heading toward an escalator, jump onto it instead of walking on as Kelly will jump halfway up it, thereby saving you time. Once you catch Harry a few times, the bats will start to bounce higher. Stop trying to jump them. Instead, duck under them.

An embarrassing situation may also arise if you decide to go up onto the roof before Harry does. Guess what? You can't get back down! So don't go up on the roof unless he is already up there.

The faster the game gets going, the faster the objects will move and you'll notice that you cannot make just one jump or duck per screen. Instead you may have to jump two or three times per screen. Don't panic. Just try to look for the rhythm of the carts and planes. They move in a pattern. With the carts it goes: jump, run two steps, jump, run two steps, etc., and with the planes, the rhythm goes:



ACTIVISION.
KEystone Kapers

VIDEO GAME CARTRIDGE



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three steps, duck, run three steps, etc.

Keystone Kapers is a quick moving game which requires fast reflexes and much experience. So don't get frustrated if you accidentally jump too late.

Just remember "Keystone Kelly" always gets his man!!!

QIX

Atari/Atari 5200

In Qix, the player controls a marker with which he draws boxes in an attempt to trap the Spinning Qix in a pre-determined percentage of the screen area. The marker can draw in two different colors: blue, which is the fast draw, and brown, which draws slowly, but is worth twice as many points. If the Qix touches the marker's line before it is completed, the player is destroyed. Aside from dodging the Qix, the player must also avoid Sparks, which traverse the lines he leaves behind, as well as a deadly fuse, which comes chasing after the marker if it takes too long to complete a box.

The main strategy behind Qix is to draw tiny boxes, and keep on the move! The more boxes you draw, the more lines the Sparks must traverse to get to you. Try to draw the little boxes straight up the screen, splitting it in half. Once you get close to the top, draw straight up in slow draw. This will fill half the screen with slow draw, and give you plenty of points. Once this is done, concentrate on the half the Qix is on. Fill it slowly by drawing clusters of tiny boxes. Try to build a trap by forming a square from little boxes. Leave an opening and wait for the Qix



to go through. When he does, quickly close off the opening. Try to make the square as small as possible, for the more playfield area you claim, the more bonus points are earned.

Keep in mind that the marker may never cross a line which the player has already drawn. If he tries, a fuse will ignite and start after him.

Once you clear the screen twice, two Qix will appear. Remain calm and continue your strategy of drawing tiny boxes. If the chance arises where you can split the two Qix with a line, do so. This will send you on to the next screen, as well as doubling all point values from then on. Doing it again will triple them, then quadruple, and so forth.

The thing to remember in Qix is to stay with tiny boxes. It may be tempting to draw big boxes, especially if the Qix is all the way on the other side of the screen, but remain true to your tactics!

Just don't forget, the Qix is quite fast, and as Anon once said: "Never trust a whirling helix."



VECTRON

Mattel/Intellivision

In Vectron, your job is to construct an energy base section by section. There are, however, quite a few nasties in the form of "meemies" who will stop at nothing to destroy your work. Different nasties will do different types of damage. Most nasties may be shot, but this costs energy. If

your energy level is depleted three times, the game ends. The way to get more energy is to shoot the E-pak and maneuver your energy block to catch the falling energy.



The key to success in Vectron is to concentrate more on building your energy base than destroying nasties. The natural inclination is to go after the little buggers because they're zipping all over, eating your base. This is unavoidable as it only creates more of them while wasting precious energy.

I do recommend shooting the G-Sphere until it's red so it creates the harmless red hangers. That way if they hit your block, you will gain energy rather than losing it. The other time to kill meemies is when you're reinforced with E-pak energy.

The E-pak is very important and should be hit the second it appears in order to get the most powerful energy available. Try to hit one right before completing a level as your bonus points depend on how much energy you complete each level with. This will also give you more energy to start the next level with.

Although the Free Style game mode is attractive, it is not recommended. It's difficult to make precise moves in this mode and can often cause gamers to overshoot the intended target. Instead, hold the left or right button down as you fire into the energy block. This will move you across as fast as possible while hitting every opening in the base. The only time to use the Free Style mode is when an E-pak appears. When this happens, temporarily switch to free style and position the block to catch the falling energy.

One last hint: If a nasty is hovering where the energy block appears, it will be destroyed upon arrival. To avoid this, shoot the nasty with the V-gun before the block appears. Your gun can shoot even without an energy block on the screen.

Good Luck!!



By THE GAME DOCTOR

Welcome to the World of the Programmable Practitioner!

Glad to see you all could make it, gamers. The reason I've called you here today is not to offer folksy banter or award t-shirts — though both of those events will certainly transpire during the course of this column. No, I'm afraid this is one of those "serious" doctor visits, and now is the moment.

The time has come, as the Walrus said, to speak of other things. While the majority of my "Q's" don't have any really serious blues, other voices have taken on a more stodgy tone. It's "Let the buyer beware" time in the marketplace as the barrage of increasingly more alluring — and considerably lower priced — personal computers hit the marketplace. The claims and counterclaims, the bartering of questionable RAM counts (or: "The Wonderful World of K") leave even veteran gamers mystified.

Meanwhile, programmable owners wonder with righteous concern about the viability of their system's future. Ever-larger piles of software form an intimidating wall of unknown products, often couching mediocre software in packaging of eyeball-melting splendor. Ads, the lack of demonstrations, and a thousand other problems assail the gaming populace.

What we have right now, my faithful patients, is a very bad cold in the videogame universe. If treated and dealt with, it will disappear after the games are spent. If not, then the grumblings muttered in the streets of Gameland will grow to fever pitch.

With that said, let's get to it.

Q: In your September issue you showed the Xonox Double-Enders dual game cartridges for the Atari 2600. I was wondering how much these "two-in-one" games will cost?

Also, as a fan of Atari's hidden "easter eggs", I was wondering if they plan to continue doing this?

(Todd Kivc, Oshkosh, WI)



ROBIN HOOD: PRINCE OF THIEVES

A: The Xonox Double-Enders, which feature a game at both ends of the cartridge, will retail for approximately \$25. Not all Xonox carts will be Double-Enders, however, though the single games will be the exception rather than the rule.

As for those lovely "easter eggs", Atari is well aware of how popular these nifty little items are and plans to continue them indefinitely. So, keep on looking.

Q: As someone who sold their 2600 before purchasing the Atari 5200, I have three important questions: When will decent controllers be

available; when will Atari produce some sort of adapter to make their TV box (RF adapter) compatible with my computer; and when will the 2600 module be available?

I can't believe how irresponsible Atari is behaving in this. But then, maybe I'm just in a bad mood (I just spent an hour trying to play Pac-Man with those crummy joysticks).

(Roger Blestene, Arlington, VA)

A: Atari has redesigned the 5200 with RF boxes that are compatible with everyone else's. What we are not sure of is whether or not the company will trade in the old models for new ones.

After a period of fence-sitting during which the major joystick manufacturers attempted to gauge the 5200's viability (and Atari's commitment to it), it seems the gourmet controller for the 5200 will be right behind the ColecoVision-compatible stick/keypad hybrids now turning up everywhere.

Finally, some good tidings: That 2600 adapter module is available! Merry Christmas one and all — there is an Atari Santa Clause for 2600-ers!

That about puts the brand on the last cow for this session of "Q&A". And remember, as the business of videogames becomes more and more difficult for even hobbyists to understand, we'll just have to work all that much harder to get the answers and facts, such as they are to you.

You give us the "Q's" and we'll get you the "A's". Promise.

GAMES

NEW
EXPERT
SECRETS

THE VIDEO MASTER'S GUIDE TO



BY STEVE SANDERS

NOW A CHAMPION REVEALS TRICKS AND TWISTS
TO BOOST YOUR SCORE... YOU'LL GO APE!



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DONKEY KONG IS A TRADEMARK OF NINTENDO OF AMERICA INC.
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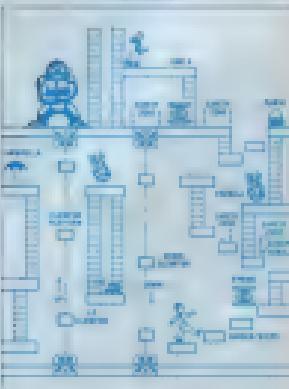
A Guide To Donkey Kong

Just about anything you ever wanted to know about *Donkey Kong* is covered in *The Video Master's Guide to Donkey Kong* (by Steve Sanders, Random, \$7.95), another addition to the series. The 80-page book offers details on everything from the control panel to strategies for each level of the game.

The author clearly conveys his enthusiasm for the electronic story of beauty and the beast, but again, the problem is that the author has incorporated too much detail. Sometimes there really isn't enough to say about even a fine game like *Donkey Kong* to fill a good-sized book. In this case, there's so much preliminary information that the actual playing of the game isn't covered until more than a third of the way through the book.

The strategies for the various levels are presented in beginner, intermediate and advanced divisions which

Diagram &
Answers



Donkey Kong playfield as seen in schematic diagram from the book.

LIBRARY

By CHARLENE KOWAR

don't work as well for Donkey Kong as they would for other games. For instance, the major difference in advice for the first level of barrels is: novices are told to jump only from a standing position, while intermediates should learn to jump while running. Frankly, it might be better to advise novices to spend a few quarters learning basic *Donkey Kong* skills like ladder-climbing and barrel-jumping before really playing the game.

Advanced suggestions could be grouped under one heading, since they mainly consist of quick tricks for expert players.

If you've seen any of the books in this series, you know what to expect from this one. The writing is perhaps a bit more lively than in some of its sister publications, but the basics remain the same: extensive details, at some points poor organization of material, and an effort to stretch the length beyond its natural limits.

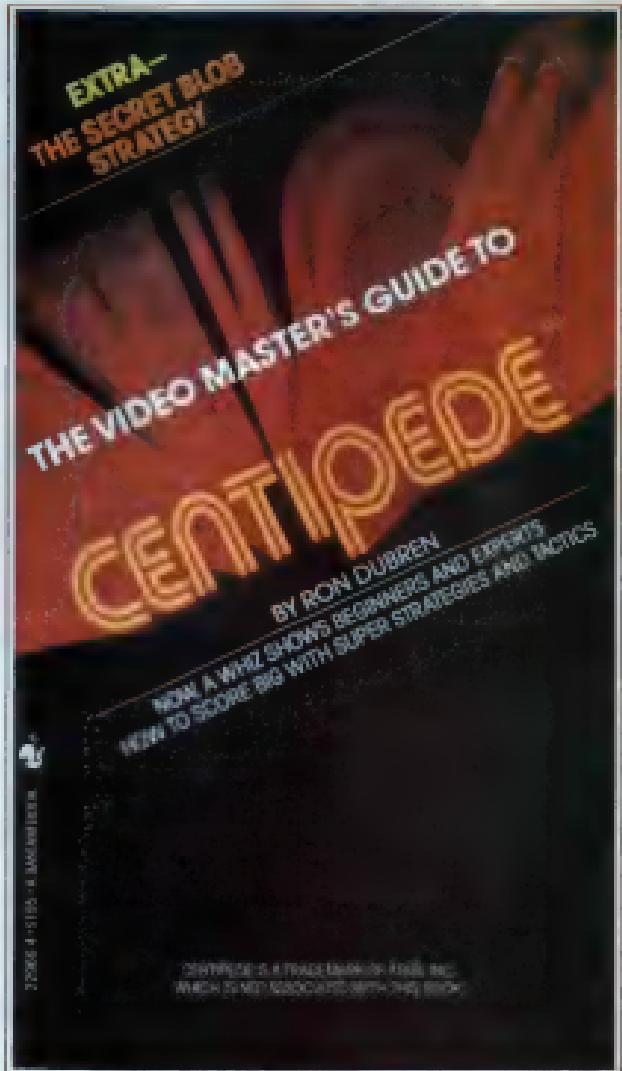
A Guide To Centipede

The Video Master's Guide to *Centipede* (by Ron Dubren, Bantam, \$1.95) is another in the series started earlier this year. The book is similar in concept and execution to those already presented in the series. It also offers no credential for its "master" author.

The book has five sections: an Introduction, Game Elements, Strategy and Tactics, Unorthodox Playing Styles and For Fans and Fanatics Only.

The introduction, as found in many how-to video books, is a throw-away. If the author can't produce anything better than what's offered here, it would be better off totally eliminated or at least cut to a single page. Frankly, this is a total waste of time.

Game Elements gets down to the meat of the book. It's undeniably complete, starting with a basic expla-



©1986 by AMHz Media Inc., Inc.
which is not associated with the game.



The Block Bouncer Busts Loose!

By JOYCE WORLEY

This month we're looking at the cream of the crop — three games that are sure to charm even the most ardent aracker. Take another look at your gift list, and see if one of these won't just exactly fit the bill — or add one to your own holiday list of things you'd like to receive. In either case, there are certain to be a sparkle in the eye of the person who receives one!

Q'BERT

Parker Brothers/BSB

The lovable cube-hopper Q'bert has leapt all the way from the arcades to the table-top. This jumpy fellow started life in the D. Gottlieb & Company (now Midway) coin-op. His first leap was into the hearts of gamers. It's not hard to understand why Q'bert's fans are so devoted. This cuddly ball is filled with personality and charm. The game of fun that surrounds the play-for-pay version has been successfully stuffed into the miniature game, producing a home version that arackers of all ages will itch to get their hands on.

Parker Brothers managed to shrink the coin-operated game down to stand-alone size while making only small compromises.

Just as in the arcade version, Q'bert starts each game at the top of a 21-

cube pyramid, then jumps from one square to another to change the colors. The aracker must guide Q'bert from cube to cube, evading the abundant wildlife that threatens the little hopper. Once Q'bert has changed all the squares to the correct color, a new round of play begins. Level 1, round 1 begins with Q'bert sitting atop a pyramid of blacked-out cubes. Each time he leaps



on a new square. It turns greenish-gold. After a second or two, the other pyramid inhabitants show up. First, Red Ball starts rolling down the screen, and if Q*bert collides with one he loses his life. A squealing note signals his dismay, then a new Q*bert appears in the same cube.

Every now and then, a Red Ball turns into Colly when it reaches the last row of cubes. This snaky creature moves freely up and down the pyramid in pursuit of Q*bert, and the only way to escape Colly is to lure him into jumping off the pyramid. Colly always tries to follow Q*bert, so when he hops a disc and flees away to safety, Colly tumbles off the pyramid in a death plunge.

Slick appears in Level 2. This crafty creature travels down the pyramid, sometimes changing the colors so Q*bert's got to go back and do the whole thing all over again. Although...

Q*bert can catch Slick by running into him. This not only gets rid of the pesky beast, but also gains Q*bert some extra points.

The moving discs help Q*bert when he's in trouble with pursuers close behind. Q*bert can jump on one of these flying saucers and get a quick ride to the top of the heap. By delaying Q*bert's hop to the disc

until Colly is close behind, Q*bert lures the snake off the edge of the pyramid, and gains points for eliminating his worst enemy. The disc then disappears, not to return again during that round of play. The number of discs and their placement along the sides of the pyramid differ, depending on the game level and round.

The round ends when Q*bert has





The Block Bouncer Busts Loose!

By JOHN HORNBY

The month was an exciting one for Grand Theft Auto—until game 2 hit the streets and the game became popular. Game creators spent a year and half, and lots of cash, creating something extraordinary for the last—almost entirely overlooked—Mitsubishi addition to their ever-expanding catalog of games. And now it's time to introduce the newest member of the family of the greatest action-adventure titles.

OP-ED

Block Busters

This month's video game, *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City Stories*, is the first of many more to come. This game follows around the life of a local mobster in a city based on Miami. Game creators have set the plot back into the 1980s, when the streets of Miami were filled with drug dealers and gangsters. It's not hard to understand why it's had such a massive impact. It's a game that's been created to be played on a console, but it's also great for playing on a PC. It's a game that's been created to be played on a console, but it's also great for playing on a PC.

And it's a game that's been created to be played on a console, but it's also great for playing on a PC. And it's a game that's been created to be played on a console, but it's also great for playing on a PC.

over several free levels that are used to unlock the game's full potential.

The creators made sure that the game's story line is well thought out and that the game's characters are well developed. The game's graphics are also impressive, with a variety of colors and textures that make the game look like a real-life movie.

And it's a game that's been created to be played on a console, but it's also great for playing on a PC. And it's a game that's been created to be played on a console, but it's also great for playing on a PC.

And it's a game that's been created to be played on a console, but it's also great for playing on a PC.

John Hornby

changed every square in the pyramid. The screen lights flash, and the destination color changes for the next round. The game gets progressively more difficult as the levels advance. The speed of all the characters gets progressively faster, and the moves to change the colors grow more complex.

The aracker has five Q*berts, and when they have all perished the game ends. There's a musical salute, and the screen flashes a "game over" sign and the final score. To play again, just move the joystick in any direction, and the whole contest begins anew.



Q*BERT (PARKER BROTHERS)

There are four rounds of play in each of the game's nine levels. First, Q*Bert hops from a darkened square and turns it to greenish-gold. When all the squares in the pyramid have been altered, the round ends and the screen flashes. In round two, Q*Bert changes the squares to silver on one side. Round three changes the squares to silver on both sides, and round four changes the cubes to black.

Beginning with level 2, the game gets more difficult. When Q*Bert jumps onto the original color, it changes to an intermediate color. Jump on it again, and it changes to the destination color. But watch out for Slick, or he'll change the squares back and make Q*Bert do the whole thing once again.

In level 3, Q*Bert's leap to each



square changes it to the destination color. Just remember, if he has to retrace his steps, each leap changes the color back again. It takes real planning to get through the rounds without undoing his work.

Level 4 goes through three changes in each round. When Q*Bert first jumps on a square, it changes to an intermediate color, and jumping on it again changes it to the destination color. But if Q*Bert leaps on the destination color, it reverts back to the intermediate hue again, and he's got to start anew.

Level 5 is the most complicated leap. When Q*Bert jumps on the original color, it changes to an intermediate shade. His next jump takes it to the destination color. Although any subsequent leaps make the cube revert all the way back to the original color, so the entire process must be done all over again.

Levels 6 through 9 use the same movement patterns as in level 5, but the color combinations alter to make it a little harder on the aracker.

Q*Bert is a high-scoring game. Each time he changes a cube to its destination color, the aracker scores 30 points. Catching Slick is worth 100 points, and luring Coily off the edge of the pyramid is good for a whopping 500 points. In addition, gamers score 500 points for completing each round after the first, with the exception of levels 5 and 9, where round one icons



Q*BERT (PARKER BROTHERS)

100 points. An additional Q*bert is awarded for every 10,000 points.

The animation is beautifully done by matting. The cubes themselves are hand-somely rendered in green-line drawings. The Flying discs and Colby are green-gold, and Q*bert, Slick and Red Ball are executed in brilliant scarlet. The color changes are convincing, going from black to gold, to half silver, then all silver, then to black again. The matting of Q*bert and the other creatures is especially well thought out. Q*bert appears as an all-red creature. His round head becomes Red Ball, and his body turns into Slick. By using these separate components, the designers managed to get a lot of creatures onto the tiny screen — quite an accomplishment in this miniature size!

Purists may wish for the clever cartooned characters of the coin-op version, but it's hard to fault the play-action of this small amusement. The worst you can say about the game is that it's very easy at its lowest level. Although that makes it a good bet for younger arcaders who might find a harder game a little daunting. And when you work your way up to the top skill levels, the play gets a lot tougher, making this stand-alone a winner.



Q*BERT HOW IT PLAYS:

Choose regular or mute play, then use the joystick controller to move Q*Bert diagonally up and down the pyramid. Be careful not to let him fall off the edge, and steer carefully to avoid running into the other wildlife on-screen. Each round starts by flushing the level and round number at the

top of the screen, and the destination color indicators at the top left corner indicate what hue Q*Bert is trying to change the pyramid to. When leaping onto a flying disc, be sure to use the correct net square — the one just below the disc — or Q*Bert will fall off the pyramid to his death.

After Rescuing Damsels, Mario Works at the Cement Factory!

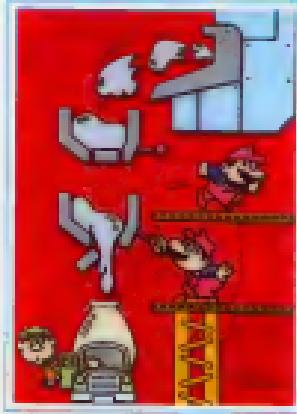
MARIO'S CEMENT FACTORY

Nintendo/1985

After saving his fair lady from the clutches of Donkey Kong, life has more or less gone back to normal for Mario, the heroic construction worker. Now that he's got a wife to support, he's up-at-dawn every day to work in the cement plant.

Mario runs a truck-loading dock. The tough little fellow must fill the hoppers with concrete, then load the waiting cement-mixer trucks.

Nintendo's first game came as a manufacturer of coin-operated video games for arcades, and following that, for hand-held Game & Watch pocket-sized units. This year, for the first time, Nintendo introduced its own table-top games. These handsome units are shrunken versions of their play-for-pay parents, and give the arader a chance to bring his favorite game home.



MARIO'S CEMENT FACTORY (NINTENDO)

Mario's Cement Factory makes work fun, as Mario operates twin loading hoppers on the left and right

sides of the screen. Two elevators move up and down between two chutes, and Mario uses these to move from one side to another.

Concrete comes out of the machine in large gloopy loads, and it takes three chunks of cement to fill the top hopper. When Mario opens the hopper door, the cement falls into the bottom container. Mario then rides an elevator down to the lower level, and opens the gate of that hopper so the concrete can flow into the waiting truck.

Yet things never go smoothly for the little worker. Since both cement chutes are pouring out concrete, Mario has to run himself ragged to keep up, jumping from one side to another, and climbing from top to bottom hopper and back again to keep the mud flowing. When either of the upper hoppers is filled with three loads of cement, a warning signals the gamer that it's in danger of

overflowing. Then Mario must rally scurry to get to the lever that makes the concrete flow into the lower container. When the lower hopper is filled with three loads of cement, that lever must be opened to let it pass into the truck.

If Mario fails to empty any full hopper and another load of cement drops from the chute, the hopper overflows; it falls right on the head of the truck driver, knocking him out of the truck and covering him with the sticky glop. This counts as a miss for Mario. A new worker appears and the game proceeds, with the little fellow scurrying around the screen trying to keep ahead of the loading chutes. This continues until three Mario's have missed, either by dropping the cement onto the head of the hapless hack, or by failing to make good elevator connec-



tions, thereby crashing into the roof or dropping to the basement.

Mario's Cement Factory doesn't require a great deal of manual skill to play well. A two-direction joystick moves the cement worker left and right, and the only tricky spot to contend with is the transfer from side to side via the elevators. If Mario tries to hop-on an elevator when it's not exactly adjacent to his position, he'll plunge to the basement. If he doesn't get off of an elevator before it gets to the

ceiling, or before it reaches bottom, he perishes. The joystick gives the gamer good control over the little man, and it only takes a little practice for even a novice gamer to gain mastery of his movements. There is a fail-safe if Mario misses an elevator on his upward trip. If he can't jump to a down lift, moving the joystick to the left will make him grab a pipe that dangles from the ceiling. He can cling there until he's lined up for the return trip. Similarly, if he rides to the bottom and is about to plunge into the basement, a hanging pipe beneath the loading dock platform is a refuge until a rising elevator comes along.

Mario's Cement Factory does require quite a bit of strategy to play well. The gamer has to use a lot of judgement to decide when to leave one hopper and go on to the other. Usually it's best not to wait for three full loads to fall into one container, then open the gates for those three to fall through. Keep an eye on how quickly the other loading bin is being filled, and maneuver Mario to make sure he empties that one before it overflows, too. The trick to scoring well at this game is to keep moving. Systematically visit each of the four stations, and dump the contents of the hoppers with each visit, so they'll always be ready to receive another load of cement. In this way, Mario can stay ahead of the loading system, without dropping even one batch of sticky concrete on the waiting truck driver.

The gamer scores one point for each load of concrete emptied from an upper to a lower hopper, and two points for each load emptied from the lower one into the truck. A special melody serenades the gamer at 100 points, and at 300, all misses are cancelled. If there are no misses, the scoreboard flashes, and the game goes into "challenge." Both of the lower hoppers remain open at all times, and Mario only has to worry about the two upper containers.

The graphics are accomplished by matching small images of the game's components; then the screen illumination comes from a skylight in the roof of the unit. Consequently, Mario's Cement Factory looks jewel-like when played in normal room light, near a window, or outdoors in sunlight. The images are nicely executed drawings, more colorful than possible if they were created either electronically or video-game-style. And the glowing light filtering through the skylight pro-



duces clear and attractive pictures. The disadvantage to this system is that the game really can't be played in the dark, or even in dim lighting, since it requires a strong light through the roof-window to awaken the scene. There's hardly a gamer who won't be thrilled by the brilliant scene that comes to life when sunlight streams through the mini-window and fills the screen with beautifully cartooned figures.

Mario's Cement Factory contains two skill levels, one faster than the other, as well as an alarm clock. The alarm even has a special visual component: Mario hops out of the truck on the right, and rings a bell...not only a musical way to be awakened, but also a nice cartoon to give you a smile before you even climb out of bed!

Although not very difficult, Mario's Cement Factory is a visual treat. The play-action is smooth and straight-forward, and the musical accompaniments add an entire level of enjoyment.

Finally, isn't it nice to know that after rescuing his wife from the ape, Mario has a calm job to return to?

MARIO'S CEMENT FACTORY HOW IT PLAYS:

Choose Game A (easier) or B (more difficult), then maneuver Mario around the screen with the joystick. The elevator on the left moves down, and the one on the right lifts him toward the ceiling. By moving back and forth between the two, Mario can get his work done. When he's ready to

dump a load of concrete, move Mario next to the hopper's lower, then push the open button to release the cement. One load of concrete flows through with each push of the button, from the chute into the upper hopper, then to the lower receptacle, and finally into the truck.



Planet Zeon Is Being Zapped!



PLANET ZEON © 1990 CORPORATION

TOMYTRONIC 3-D PLANET ZEON

Tomy Corporation/Under \$50

Planet Zeon is under attack by squadrons of enemy warships and fuel tanks from outer space. The arcade man laser-armed fighter ships to battle them back to where they came from and save the planet.

Tomy's trilogy of 3-D goggle-games

is completely unique. Sky Attack casts the gamer as a tank commando facing down incoming bombers. Thundering Turbo puts the arcade in the seat of a stock car in a race to rival the Indy 500. Planet Zeon, Tomy's third handheld game housed in held glass-style casing, requires the electrogamer to battle an alien war fleet, ship by ship, as they plunge into Zeon's orbit.

The arcade man a wing of four spacecraft. The reserve ships disappear from the screen, then it's human versus alien in a heated battle. The space corridors are clear when the game starts, but the aliens quickly appear far off in the distance as they race directly toward Zeon. Maneuver the fighter left and right to circle the oncoming ships, then let loose a blast of laser fire as soon as the first one is in range. As quickly as one blast is fired, position the fighter for the next enemy confrontation. The ships pour toward the planet in waves of 40 in each squadron, each worth 10 points to the gamer, and at least 20 of the ships must be destroyed in order to advance to the next level.

There is a special bonus for destroying more than 20 ships from a



PLANET ZEON

squadron. Score 10 points for each ship, and an additional 10 points for each ship over 20. In other words, zapping 25 enemies gets 250 points, plus an additional 50 point bonus. Just try destroying fewer than 20 in any squadron, and there's a 10-point per ship penalty. For example, shoot 15 ships and score 150, but the penalty is 50 points, so you end up with 100.



The alien warcrafts zoom straight toward the front of the screen, and the fighter must maneuver around the perimeter of the flight corridors to get a clear shot at each oncoming enemy. Each fighter has eight levels of fuel reserves, and loses a level for every alien fuel tanker that escapes. If the fighter runs out of fuel, it crashes, so the arcade should keep one eye on the fuel gauge. When supplies get low, zap the enemy fuel tankers to refill the reserves. Although beware when shooting fuel tankers, which always travel along the corridors in the

lower half of the screen. Intermingled with the enemy tankers are meteors, and any collision will destroy the fighter plane.

Planet Zoon is housed in a binocular-style case, and the graphics present true 3-D action. The Tomytronic 3-D games are perfect for those times when you want to carry an amusement with you to the beach. Since the screen is illuminated by a skylight in the unit, it can be played in room light or out of doors. (It cannot be played in the dark, since the screen is not lit by any other source.) It comes equipped with a neck strap so it can be easily worn or carried.

All in all, *Planet Zoon* is an exciting addition to anyone's collection of handhelds and, if the gamer has the other two of the trilogy — *Sky Attack* and *Thunderwing Turbo* — it is a necessity.

G



PLANET ZOON HOW IT PLAYS:

Always play the game in a well-in-place, and don't cover the skylight, or the screen will be darkened. Choose a level to begin play, then move the fighter around the screen using the left- and right-hand turn buttons. When an alien ship is lined up in the fighter's range, use the fire button to blast him out of the skies. Each game starts with four fighters, and ends when they

have been destroyed. There are five skill levels and the game gets harder at the speed of the enemies increase. The top score that can appear on-screen is 1990; then the counter rolls over, but the game continues. The unit shuts off automatically if not played for three minutes — a nice feature that saves the three "AA" batteries that power the action.



CONTROL GUIDE (Atari 5200)

Entertainment Systems (\$6.99 per pair, plus \$1 postage & handling)

It didn't take home arcaders long to discover a weak link in Atari's 5200 super system: The joystick are horrendous. Not only are the plugs incompatible with all other existing Atari joystick or paddle controllers, the stick isn't even self-centering. That is, it does not automatically spring back to the center position when released. The "dead fist" effect caused by this peculiarity is mostly a nuisance, but it becomes an unbearable handicap when playing games such as *Super Breakout* (the most ill-suited to this non-paddle system) and *Pac-Man*. The problem is that to move an on-screen object to the right, the stick must be positioned "exactly" at three o'clock. Move left? Go to nine o'clock — and you'd better be pinpoint accurate too!

To help the faithful, a couple of New Jerseyites have produced a slide-on "control guide" for games involving only vertical and/or horizontal movement. As with most adapters, it isn't the total answer, but this is an inexpensive and inventive idea that's well worth the price. (P.O. Box 376, Oakhurst, NJ 07759)



POWERPAD (CHALK BOARD)

POWERPAD

Chalk Board:\$29.95

The Powerpad, from Chalk Board, a touch-sensitive input device for personal computers, not only replaces the keyboard as a means of accessing the computer but also boasts "a new technology to give users more flexibility than with any similar peripheral product on the market," according to its manufacturer.

Available for use with all the major home computers (Commodore, Apple, Atari and IBM), the Powerpad was created to interface with Chalk Board's "Leonardo's Library", a new set of educational software packages.



Rinteraction between the readers and editors of *Electronic Games* helps make the a better magazine. The more we hear at EG know about who you are and what you want to read, the better we can satisfy your needs and desires. That's why we run a Reader Poll in every single issue of this magazine. Rest assured that even though we protect the anonymity of every respondent to our survey, the editor personally reads each and every ballot received. And of course, this is also your ballot for casting your vote for the most popular videogames, computer game programs and coin-op arcade machines.

Please return this poll sheet — or a photocopy, if you prefer to keep your *Electronic Games* in perfect condition — to: *Electronic Games*, 490 West 34th Street, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10001.

SEX AND AGE:

Male Female Age _____

MARITAL STATUS:

Single Married

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**NUMBER OF CHILDREN
IN HOUSEHOLD:** _____

AGPS:

Under 3 3-5
 6-11 12-17

Please indicate the number of cartridges, disks, etc. which you own or plan to buy within the next 12 months for the systems below:

	<u>Own</u>	<u>Plan to Buy</u>
Atari VCS	_____	_____
Intellivision	_____	_____
ColecoVision	_____	_____
Odyssey [®]	_____	_____
Atari 5200	_____	_____
Other Videogame System	_____	_____
VIC-20	_____	_____
Alan 400/800	_____	_____
IBM Personal Computer	_____	_____
Apple II	_____	_____
Commodore 64	_____	_____
TI 99/4A	_____	_____
Other Microcomputer	_____	_____
Video Cassette Recorder	_____	_____
VideoDisc Player	_____	_____

How many hours per week do you spend playing various electronic games:

Less than 2 hours 2-5 hours 6-10 hours More than 10 hours

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How many people, besides yourself will read this issue of *Electronic Games*:

NAME OF GAME

SYSTEM

My favorite videogame cartridges are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

My favorite microcomputer games are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

My favorite coin-op games are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Comin' G

Attractions

CAN ELECTRONIC GAMING SURVIVE THE BIG SHAKE-OUT?

Competition is rugged, retail prices are tumbling and there are a couple of crippled teeth in the gaming industry's big smile. Some hardware and software manufacturers will thrive, some will barely survive, and some are going to go to the wall. Expect EG to present the most important story any electro-arcader will read this winter, an incisive probe of the 可能な状況 in the game business — and what it means for players.

ATARI 5300 VS COLLECTVISION — ONE YEAR LATER

Collecto jumped out to an early lead in the "third wave" programmable derby, but Atari is demonstrating come-hair-behind-power. Now that both systems have been available for over a year, it's time to look at them again, and see how they stack up against each other.

TOPS & FLOPS OF 1983

It was quite a year for game-lovers, wasn't it? The editors have reviewed the events of the last 12 months, and now they have a few dubious honors to pass out to those who hit it big — or failed spectacularly.

THE PLAYERS GUIDE TO COMPUTER WARGAMES

Our magazine-within-a-magazine will take you on a tour of the world's most exciting electronic battleship. Whether it's land, sea, air or space combat you

like best, you'll find exactly the computer simulations you want.

THE COMPUTER GAMING SECTION

Our comprehensive computer coverage blossoms to its full glory in February, featuring authoritative reviews of action, sports, strategy, war, adventure and educational games for all of the most popular systems. No magazine has more coverage of software for the Atari computer, VIC-20, Commodore 64, Apple, IBM PC and other fun machines.

There'll be plenty of other exciting articles and features of interest to arcaders, plus these regular columns:

- Passport to Adventure
- Q&A
- Inside Gaming
- Arcade America
- Computer Gaming
- Programmable Paradise

- Switch Out
- New Products
- Test Lab
- Readers Replay
- Big Stories
- Games Library

- Stand-Alone Games
- Mini-Arcade Gallery
- Articles of War
- Strategy Session
- Insert Coin Here
- In Control

Be watch for the exciting January issue of ELECTRONIC GAMES
On Sale December 14, 1984

NOW YOUR COMPUTER FITS THE ORIGINAL ARCADE HITS.



Now the excitement of original arcade graphics and sound effects comes home to your computer!

Introducing ATARISOFT™ A new source for computer software

If you own a Commodore VIC 20 or 64, a Texas Instruments 99/4A, an IBM or an Apple II, you can play the original arcade hits.

DONKEY KONG by Nintendo **CENTIPEDE**® **PAC-MAN**, **DEFENDER**, **ROBOTRON-2084**, **STARGATE** and **DIG DUG**. (On the TI 99/4A you can also play **Protector II**, **Shamus**, **Pinocchio** and **Super Stomn**.)

Please start playing the principal parts on your computer. Run from ATARI SOFT.

Some games also available on ColecoVision and Intellivision.

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What you can do for him: the research helps

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THIS IS NO GAME.



SPACE SHUTTLE— A JOURNEY INTO SPACE.TM

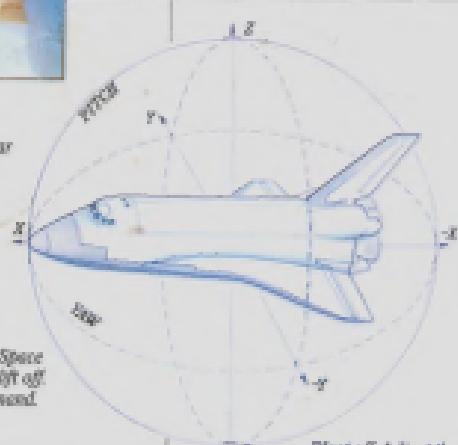
Get ready for the most spectacular launch in video history. A new breakthrough that takes your Atari® 2600™ farther than it's ever gone before.

The countdown begins. The 10th mission of the U.S. Space Shuttle is about to lift off. And you're in command.



Fasten your seat belt. Take a deep breath. And prepare for an unprecedented video challenge.

With astounding realism, you'll re-enact every phase of an actual Shuttle mission. Your Atari® 2600™ becomes a sophisticated control system that demands instant response, intense concentration, quick thinking, and even quicker action.



T-2 Blast off! Adjust thrust and trajectory. Jettison first- and second-stage boosters. Check air speed. Achieve orbit. Open cargo bay.



doors. Rendezvous with a satellite. Set pitch and yaw. Re-enter the atmosphere. Lower landing gear and correct glide path.



Touch down at Edwards Air Force Base and receive your flight evaluation.

Make no mistake: it won't be easy. But once you've completed your first mission, you'll really have earned your wings.

Space Shuttle—
A Journey Into Space. Designed by Steve Krueken after consultation with NASA. It's one giant step for video.



Activision
We put you in the game.

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